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THE

MINOR WORKS

OF

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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TERMS OF UNION:—REMARKS ADDRESSED TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE
SOCIETY.

STRICTURES ON CERTAIN PARTS OF AN ANONYMOUS
PAMPHLET ENTITLED THE TRUTH VINDICATED.

BRIEF REMARKS
ON THE
HISTORY, AUTHORITY, AND USE
OF
The Sabbath.

Dominicum servasti ?

Christianus sum ; intermittere non possum.

ACTS OF THE MARTYRS.

FIFTH EDITION,

WITH AN APPENDIX BY MOSES STUART, OF NORTH AMERICA.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN presenting to the public the following remarks on the history, authority, and use of the sabbath, I feel that some apology is due from me in consequence of the late publication, on the same subject, of some excellent discourses by my worthy friend, Daniel Wilson of Islington. Such an apology is the more necessary, because our views on the subject very much correspond, and we have treated it on nearly the same plan.

The fact is, however, that my own opinions respecting the sabbath had been long previously formed; and I had arranged the order of the present little work, before I had the opportunity of perusing his useful volume. While, therefore, I sincerely thank him for some valuable information, which was not before equally familiar to me, I consider it right to persevere in presenting to my fellow Christians *of every name*, this humble effort for their good.

Persons who are desirous of promoting the religious welfare of the community, occupy, in the present day, a variety of stations, and their influence extends itself in very different directions. How important then that each should perform his own part faithfully, and thus that *all* should be labouring in the common cause of righteousness and truth!

Among the early Christians, the first day of the week was almost universally called *the Lord's day*—an appellation for which

we have apostolic authority in the book of Revelation. Since, however, this title includes the sacred name, the familiar use of it appears to be undesirable; and I have therefore more usually adopted the term *sabbath-day*. In applying to the Christian's day of rest and worship, the name of SABBATH, I consider that I am fully justified, both by the simple meaning of the word, and by the express language of the fourth commandment.

Should the evidences which I am about to adduce, be the means of convincing any doubtful mind of the divine authority of this institution, or of quickening the diligence of any of my readers in the observance of its duties, I shall regard it as a fresh call for gratitude to that Being, without whose blessing no labour of Christian love can ever prosper.

BRIEF REMARKS.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE PATRIARCHAL SABBATH.

THE moral, and therefore permanent, nature of that divine institution which devotes every seventh day to a holy rest, may be fairly deduced from the earliest record relating to the subject. The history of the glorious works which occupied, in succession, the six days of creation, is completed by the following description of the FIRST SABBATH.¹

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”²

There are two points in this passage which mark the moral and spiritual character of the sabbath.

¹ The name sabbath, (as I presume most of my readers are aware,) properly signifies *rest*. The Hebrew substantive שבת is obviously from a root formed of the same consonants, and signifying “*to cease from labour*.”—Vide *Simonis Lex*.

² Gen. ii, 1—3.

The first is, that God *blessed* and *sanctified* the seventh day. He bestowed upon it a blessing above that of other days; and therefore, in all generations, those who rightly observed it were to be blessed in the use of it; and he also sanctified it—by which we are to understand that he *set it apart, or consecrated it to religious purposes.*

The Jewish Talmudists pretend that this consecration of the seventh day was simply *prospective*,—that the mention of it, in this passage, is nothing more than an allusion to a law which was long afterwards to be enacted for the benefit of the Israelites alone. The currency of such an opinion among these doctors is easily explained; for the Jews have ever been jealous of admitting the Gentiles to a participation in their religious polity. Had they allowed that the sabbath was instituted in the first age of the world, they could not have denied that it was a provision of divine wisdom and mercy for the use of *all* mankind; but by fixing its earliest origin at the time of the Exodus, they restricted this ordinance to themselves. Accordingly, the observance of the sabbath was forbidden to the “proselytes of the gate,” as those Gentiles were called who believed in the truth of the Israelitish theology, but did not (as it were) *make themselves Jews* by adopting all the Mosaic ceremonies. The Talmudists decided that no Gentiles were authorized to observe that holy day, except the proselytes of justice—persons who conformed, in every other respect, to the ritual of Judaism.³

³ Vide *Selden de Jure Nat. et Gen. juxta disciplinam Ebræorum*, lib. iii, cap. 9, 10.

Now, although the opinion of the Talmudists respecting this passage, has been adopted by some learned men who were much accustomed to the perusal of their works, (for instance, John Selden and Dr. Gill,) it appears to rest on a very weak foundation. Every plain reader of Scripture must, I think, understand from these verses, that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, immediately after the creation; and, if he *then* blessed and sanctified it, common sense forbids our supposing that no effect was to be produced by his doing so, except on one small division of mankind, *after the lapse of two thousand five hundred years.* We may surely rather conclude from our premises, that the Creator at once set the day apart for holy uses, and graciously bestowed the blessing of the sabbatical institution *on the whole human race.*

There is, however, a second reason suggested by this passage of Scripture, for our regarding the sabbath as a moral and spiritual institution; namely that it was founded on a divine pattern,—on the *example of God himself.* God sanctified the seventh day, or set it apart for holy uses, “BECAUSE in it he had rested from all his work⁴ which God created and made.” Again we read in Exod. xx, 11—“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.” God created man in his “own image,” after his “likeness;”⁵ from which expressions it may be inferred

⁴ Gen. ii, 3.

⁵ Gen. i, 26.

that man, in a variety of respects, and in a certain degree, was to be conformed to the attributes of God. Endued with the faculty of reason, with power over all inferior animals, with an immortal soul, and above all, with moral virtues, he was destined to afford an infinitely diminished, yet lively, representation of the Author of his being. Now the keeping of the sabbath was one of those particulars of conduct, by the observance of which man was to be characterized, *after the model of his Creator*. It cannot, I think, be conceived, that a duty required of us, on this peculiar ground—a duty so plainly contributing to the maintenance in man of the *image* of God—can be otherwise than of universal and permanent obligation.

We cannot, indeed, form any just notion of the sabbath of Jehovah—what was the nature of the rest of God, or what the period through which it might extend. Yet this rest, *as a model*, is presented to our notice in an intelligible shape, and man is commanded to cease from labour every seventh day, after the example of his Maker. And further, although we are not aware what relation the sabbath of Jehovah might have to his moral attributes, it is unquestionably true that the observance of the sabbath is required of *man*, as a moral and spiritual being—one who is accountable for all his actions, and who has eternal interests at stake.

In order to form a just view of the moral importance of the institution, we need only call to mind, that man, in this state of probation, is encompassed with things, temporal in their nature, which meet his senses and engross his attention; that he has within

him, nevertheless, an immortal part, which, amidst all these perishing scenes, is now to be prepared for an invisible and eternal world. How evident is it therefore, in the very nature of things, that a proportion of our *time* must be set apart for this object—not only that every day should bring with it its hour of private devotion—not only that a spirit of piety should pervade the whole business of life—but that at some frequently recurring period, our temporal engagements should entirely cease, and opportunity be given to the soul to commune at leisure with its Creator, and to deal deliberately with the eternal future! The Jews themselves were well aware that the bodily rest ordained on the sabbath, was essential to the strength and refreshment of the mind, which, thus invigorated, was to apply its undivided powers to holy things. “This,” says one of their doctors, “is the sanctification of the sabbath, that on that day the human mind should fix itself on no worldly business, but only on *things divine*.”⁶

It may be objected, that these remarks are applicable only to persons who enjoy the light of revelation; because merely natural religion does not, with clearness, teach us the doctrine of our immortality, and, therefore, makes no demand on our reason for the observance of a sabbath. To this objection it is a sufficient answer, that God *did* reveal his truth to our first parents and their immediate descendants—that although, therefore, our fallen race soon sunk into a state of corruption, and ignorance of their Creator,

⁶ *Ab. Ezra apud Selden de Jure Nat. et Gen. lib. iii, cap. 13.*

pure religion, and *its accompanying sabbath*, were nevertheless intended for all mankind. They are, and ever were, of universal applicability to our species.

Innocent as our first parents were before the fall, and at peace with God, we may conclude that even for them the dedication of every seventh day to a holy rest, was both a duty and a privilege. They must surely have delighted in the frequent recurrence of an interval, which was to be devoted to uninterrupted communion with God, and to the joyful remembrance of their own immortality. But for man in the fall, who must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; whose affections naturally tend only to earthly and sensual things; who is laden with innumerable infirmities and is corrupt at core; whose passage to the eternal world lies through *death*—for such a being, under such circumstances—a weekly sabbath of rest and devotion may well be deemed *indispensable*. This, like every other part of the moral law of God, is precisely adapted to our need, and the observance of it is essential to our virtue and happiness.

There is another point of view in which the keeping of the sabbath must be regarded as a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and as necessary to the formation in man of the *religious character*. *It is an act of faith* in Jehovah; who will be sure to provide for the temporal as well as spiritual wants of those who serve him. Man is required to cease from his labour every seventh day; and thus is made to feel, that, even for the supply of his bodily need, he may not depend exclusively on his own exertions. By the

silent admonition of a weekly sabbath he is taught to place a calm reliance on that glorious Being, who, of his own free bounty, feeds the sparrow and provides for man.

The existing record that God, after finishing the work of creation, set apart the seventh day for holy uses, together with the reasonableness and necessity of the service, affords a strong presumption, that amidst the general corruption of mankind, this institution continued to be observed, both before and after the flood, by the Patriarchal church. Of the existence of such a church from the date of the creation to that of Moses, various hints are scattered over the book of Genesis. Brief and undetailed (for the most part) as is this inspired history, it contains many incidental allusions to a system of worship—to a priesthood, places for worship, altars, sacrifices, prayers, and peculiar religious rites.⁷ There were preachers also in those early days. The apostle Peter speaks of our Saviour's preaching by his Spirit to the world before the flood;⁸ and who can doubt that this was through the instrumentality of his appointed ministers? Accordingly the same apostle elsewhere calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness."⁹

Now for the maintenance of such a system of worship, a sabbath would appear to have been essential; nor does the absence, in the history of the Patriarchs, of any express mention of its observance, materially

⁷ Ample evidences on this subject are adduced by J. J. Blunt, in his useful little work "On the Veracity of the Five Books of Moses."

⁸ 1 Pet. iii, 19.

⁹ 2 Pet. ii, 5.

weaken the probability that, under these circumstances, *it was actually observed*. It is always to be remembered that the records of the Old Testament are in many parts extremely abridged, and that the silence of these narratives respecting any supposed fact which collateral evidence renders probable, affords scarcely any degree of evidence that such a fact was not real. We know that after the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, the law of Moses, and the sabbath as forming a part of it, were publicly recognised and in full force; yet no mention is made of the sabbath in the book of Judges, the two books of Samuel, and the first book of Kings, which comprise a period of five hundred years. Although circumcision was a ceremony of marked importance during the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation, no mention is made of that rite in the whole history of the Bible, from the days of Joshua to those of John the Baptist.

The Patriarchal history does, however, contain an account of some circumstances, which afford us no insignificant hints that the sabbath was observed. Cain and Abel are described as offering their sacrifices to the Lord "*in process of time*," as our version has it, but as in the margin of that version, and in the Hebrew, "*at the end of days*."¹ Now the only period of days before alluded to, is that of the week, and it is highly probable that this form of expression indicates nothing more, than that they made their offerings on the day which terminates the week—that is, *on the sabbath*.

¹ Gen. iv, 3. מִקֵּץ יָמִים

Of the division of time into weeks we have a plain hint or two in the history of Noah. Jehovah says to Noah, "For *yet seven days*, (or yet a week,) and I will cause it to rain upon the earth," &c.² Again, when Noah's dove, after finding "no rest for the sole of her foot," had been restored to the ark, we are informed that Noah stayed "*yet other seven days*" and sent her forth; and on her return with the olive branch, he again waited for the same recognised period; "And he stayed *yet other seven days*, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more."³

It appears, then, that Noah reckoned his time by weeks, and that the seventh day of the week was to him, as well as to Cain and Abel, "*the end of days.*" Such a division of time must surely have been founded on the tradition of the six days of creation, *ending with a day of rest.* Now since this tradition had passed down to Noah through a very small number of forefathers, who probably were all worshippers of Jehovah, it seems incredible that he could be unacquainted with the fact that the seventh day was hallowed: and equally so, that being acquainted with it, this "preacher of righteousness" should himself neglect the observance of the day.

The same practice would necessarily descend with the worship of the true God, in that line of Noah's posterity, in which God was pleased to preserve a visible church. We read of Abraham, that "he obeyed" the "voice" of God, and kept his "charge," his "commandments," his "statutes," and his "laws."⁴ No wonder

² Gen. vii, 4.

³ Gen. viii, 10—12.

⁴ Gen. xxxvi, 5.

that Manasseh Ben Israel, a learned Dutch Jew, should infer from this passage that Abraham observed the sabbath; ⁵ for which of the charges, statutes, commandments, or laws of God was such a man more likely to reverence and obey? ⁶ In a Jewish book called *Bereshith Rabba* it is asserted that the sabbath was kept by Jacob. ⁷ The same thing is also said by one of the Rabbins, of Joseph; ⁸ and the probability of these assertions appears not only from the plain reason of the case, but from the indications afforded in Scripture that both these Patriarchs were acquainted with the division of time into weeks. Jacob twice served Laban for Rachel “a week of years”—a period of which the reckoning was doubtless borrowed from that of the week of days. ⁹ And Joseph devoted “seven days,” or in other words, *a whole week*, to a public mourning for his father. ¹ Aben Ezra, another learned Jew, presumes that Job kept the sabbath, because he offered sacrifice at the end of seven days, ² and is there not good reason to suppose that the day “when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord” was the day consecrated to worship—the day of the sabbath? ³

The original use of the sabbath, and its authority, *independently of the Jewish law*, are however yet more clearly proved by a distinct and most emphatic recognition of it, some time *before* the delivery of the law

⁵ *Lib. de Creatione, in Selden.*

⁶ *Vide Selden de Jure, lib. iii, cap. 13.* ⁷ *Parash 79, in Selden.*

⁸ *Bechai ad Beresith, fol. xxxvii, col. 4, in Selden.*

⁹ Gen. xxix, 27—30.

¹ Gen. 1, 10.

² Job i, 5.

³ Job i, 6; ii, 11.

from Mount Sinai. Very soon after the Israelites had commenced their journey through the wilderness, they were provided with the manna, which they gathered every morning. "And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, *This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord* and they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; *for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord*; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on *the seventh day, which is the sabbath*, there shall be none See for that the *Lord hath given you the sabbath*, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." ⁴

There is a plain accordance between the declaration of Gen. ii, 3, that God *sanctified* the seventh day, and the remarkable fact that the manna—the miraeulous gift of God—was doubled on the sixth day and stayed on the seventh. This fact, and the explanation given of it by Moses, were obviously intended to revive in the remembrance of the people, an already existing institution—to remind them of a religious duty which although (possibly) forgotten during the period of their Egyptian bondage, had been cherished by their

⁴ Exod. xvi, 22—30.

ancestors, and had always formed a part of the system of true worship.⁵

The division of time into weeks was familiar to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and they were accustomed to distinguish the seven days, by the names of seven of their deities: viz. the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Eusebius has selected from the works of Porphyry, (one of the early enemies of Christianity,) a very old Greek oracle, quoted by that writer, in which there is a distinct reference to this division and nomenclature. It is as follows:

“ Invoke Mercury on his day,
And in like manner the Sun on a Sunday—
The Moon also when her day arrives,
And Saturn and Venus, each in their order.”⁶

A similar custom is supposed to have been of great antiquity among the nations of the North of Europe, namely, the *Goths*, *Celts*, and *Sclavonians*. These nations probably derived this practice (as they did many others, and much of their language) from the East; for there is reason to believe that the reckoning of time by weeks, and an idolatrous nomenclature of the days, were prevalent, in very ancient times, in

⁵ The Talmudists parry this argument by pretending that the first institution of the sabbath is alluded to in the preceding chapter; where, after describing the sweetening of the waters in Marah, Moses says, “ And there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them;” Exod. xv, 25. It is obvious, however, that if the sabbath had been so very lately instituted, the rulers would have required no explanation of the doubling of the manna on the sixth day, and of the cessation of it on the seventh.

⁶ Κληΐζειν Ερμην ἡδὲ Ἡέλιον κατὰ ταῦτα
Ἡμερῆ Ἡελίου, Μήνην δὲ ὅτε τῆς δε παραίη
Ἡμέρη, ἡδὲ Κρόνον ἡδὲ ἔξείης Αφροδίτην.

Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. v, cap. 14.

that quarter of the globe; especially in *Chaldea* and *Egypt*. Dion, the Roman historian, says that the custom in question originated in Egypt, and from thence, at a more modern date, pervaded the whole world.⁷ Grotius confirms its ancient origin in Egypt, by reference to Herodotus.⁸

Since this peculiar division of time agrees with no astronomical sign—certainly not with the changes in the appearance of the moon—and since it is improbable that the Egyptians, or any other nation of antiquity, should borrow it from so despised a people as the Israelites, we may conclude that it was founded on a tradition, *respecting the original seven days*.⁹ On this ground, it affords a collateral evidence of the facts recorded in the Mosaic history of the creation, and, among other facts, *of the hallowing of the seventh day*. That this circumstance, indeed, formed one feature of the tradition in question, is confirmed by a variety of evidence bearing expressly on the point.

Eusebius, in his “Evangelical Preparations,” has extracted a long passage from a work addressed by Aristobulus, a Jewish Platonic philosopher, to one of the Ptolemies of Egypt, about 150 years before Christ.¹ The object of the Jew is to exalt the traditions and practices of his own nation, and to show that even the heathen held them sacred. After some

⁷ Lib. xxxvi. *Selden de Jure*, lib. iii, cap. 19.

⁸ *Herod.* lib. ii. *Grotius de Verit.* lib. i.

⁹ If, as Sir Isaac Newton supposes, the Egyptians borrowed their learning from the Edomites, the course of this tradition may be directly traced through Esau to the Patriarchs. *Chronology of Kingdoms*, p. 208.

¹ *Præp. Evang.* lib. xiii, cap. 12.

allusion to the work of creation, he speaks of the authority and use of the seventh day. This he calls the “day of light and wisdom, in which the complete order of nature is contemplated”—a day bestowed on man for the purpose of “divine philosophy.” He then proceeds to cite passages from the works of Homer and Hesiod, in which the “seventh day” is described as “sacred.”

“Sacred in the first place is the last day of the new moon.”²

“Sacred also are the fourth, and the seventh days.”

“Again came the seventh day, the illustrious light of the sun.”³

“The seventh day then arrived—a sacred day.”⁴

Hesiod is here evidently speaking of the days of the *month*, the fourth day of each month being sacred to Mercury, and the seventh to Apollo.⁵ But it is evident that each recurring seventh day, through the month, was by him regarded as holy. With regard to Homer, there are many passages in his works which indicate that in his view, every passing day and night was *sacred*. The epithet *sacred*⁶ is one which he was accustomed to lavish with a free, poetic, licence. From Linus, another ancient Greek poet, Aristobulus quotes some verses which are more applicable to his purpose—“All things in the starry heaven,” says Linus, “are made in sevens, appearing in circles, as the years arise.”⁷

² Or as some critics render ἔνη, “the third day.”

³ Πρῶτον ἔνη, τετράς τε καὶ ἐβδόμη, ἱερὸν ἡμαρ
Ἐβδομάτη δ' αὖθις λαμπρὸν φάος ἡλίοιο.

Hesiod.

⁴ Ἐβδομάτη δ' ἤπειτα κατήλυθεν, ἱερὸν ἡμαρ.

Homer.

⁵ Selden de Jure, &c. lib. iii, cap. 17.

⁶ ἱερός.

⁷ Ἐπτά δὲ πάντα τέτυκται ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστεροέντι
Ἐν κύκλοισι φανέντ' ἐπιτελλομένοις ἐνιαυτοῖς.

As it appears from this passage that his notion is that of a *perpetual rotation in sevens*, we may conclude that he refers to *each recurring seventh day*, when he writes as follows :—

“ The seventh (day) is among good things,
The seventh (day) is the birth (day),
The seventh (day) is among chief things,
The seventh (day) is perfect.”⁸

According to Clement of Alexandria, who repeats the arguments of Aristobulus, much was said in Solon’s elegies, (a work no longer extant,) respecting the divine character of the seventh day.⁹

Lucian¹ and Aulus Gellius² speak of the “ seventh day” as one on which boys exchange their books for play. Suetonius mentions the “ *sabbath*,” as selected by Diogenes the grammarian at Rome, for his public disputations.³ Tibullus describes the *day of Saturn*, i. e. “ the seventh day of the week” as “ sacred :” “ Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem.”⁴

The title of Birth—or Birth (day) applied to the seventh day by Linus, (or according to Clement, by Callimachus) implies that it was the day on which the birth of the world was celebrated. Similar terms are used on the same subject by Philo, a Jewish Platonic philosopher, who lived in Egypt, and was contemporary with our Saviour. “ When the whole world was completely formed,” says this author, “ according to the perfect nature of the number six, the Father glorified the succeeding day, being the

⁸ Ἐβδόμη εἰν ἀγαθοῖς, καὶ ἔβδόμη ἐστὶ γενέσθη
Ἐβδόμη ἐν πρώτοις, καὶ ἔβδόμη ἐστὶ τελείη.

⁹ Strom. lib. v.

¹ In Pseudologist.

² Lib. xv, 11.

³ In Nerone, 32.

⁴ Eleg. iii, line 18.

seventh, praising it and calling it holy. For it is a holy day, not of one city or place only, but of all the world—a holy day which alone can justly be described as universal—the Birth day of the world!”⁵ Whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for the bombast or exaggeration of this writer, we cannot suppose that his statement respecting the acknowledged sanctity of the seventh day among the heathen nations, was without some foundation. That statement is moreover confirmed by the positive assertion of Josephus. “Great zeal has long been displayed by multitudes in the imitation of our worship, neither is there any city of the Greeks or among foreigners—not even one nation—into which the custom of observing the seventh day *on which we rest*, has not found its way.”⁶

Some of the earliest Christian fathers give a similar testimony. Theophilus, of Antioch, (A.D. 168,) speaks of the seventh day of the week as the day “which all men celebrate.”⁷ Clement, of Alexandria, (A.D. 199,) says, that “the Greeks as well as the Hebrews, considered as sacred the seventh day, according to the recurrence of which, there is a rotation of all things

⁵ Ἐπει δ' ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐτελείωθη κατὰ τὴν ἑξάδος ἀριθμοῦ τελείαν φύσιν, τὴν ἐπίουσαν ἡμέραν ἐβδόμην ἐσέμνηνεν ὁ πατὴρ ἑπαινέσας, καὶ ἀγίαν προσείπων· ἑορτὴ γὰρ οὐ μιᾶς πόλεως ἢ χώρας ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ παντὸς (scil. κόσμου) ἦν κυρίως ἄξιον καὶ μόνον πάνδημον ὀνομάζειν, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου γενέθλιον. *De Mundi Opificio*, Ed. Mangeii, tom. i, p. 21.

⁶ Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ πλήθυσιν ἤδη πολὺς ζῆλος γέγονεν ἐκ μακροῦ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐσεβείας· οὐδ' ἐστὶν οὐ πόλις Ἑλλήνων οὐδητισσῶν, οὐδε βάρβαρος, οὐδὲ ἐν ἔθνος, ἔθνα μὴ τὸ τῆς ἐβδομάδος ἦν ἀργοῦμεν ἡμεῖς, τὸ ἔθος οὐ διαπεφοίτηκε. *Contra Apion*, lib. ii, § 39.

⁷ ἦν πάντες ἄνθρωποι ὀνομάζουσι, lib. ii, cap. 12.

living and growing.”⁸ Tertullian (A.D. 200) says that it was a custom among the Gentiles to devote *Saturday* to ease and feasting.⁹

We appear, then, to be in possession of sufficient evidence, that the reckoning of time by weeks, among the heathen—a practice of which the antiquity is beyond tracing—was accompanied by a notion more or less distinct, that the seventh day was *holy*. Now such a notion, as well as the weekly division itself, is surely to be ascribed rather to an original tradition, than to the example of the Jews—a people who, before their dispersion, were so little known, and after it, so little honoured.

That the sabbatical institution, therefore, forms part of the law of God, as it was originally revealed to mankind, we may conclude, for the following reasons:

First. Because the sacred historian, immediately after describing the six days’ work of creation, and the resting of the Creator on the seventh day, expressly declares that God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; that is, devoted it to holy purposes.

Secondly. Because the institution is founded on a divine pattern—on the recorded example of the Almighty himself.

Thirdly. Because in the very nature of things, such an institution is necessary for the due and orderly worship of our Creator, and for the effectual culture of

⁸ καὶ ἦν ὁ πᾶς κόσμος κυκλεῖται τῶν ζωογονουμένων καὶ φερόμενων.
Strom. lib. v.

⁹ Diem Saturni otio et victui decernunt. *Apolo.* cap. 16.

our immortal part ; and thus, like that pure theology from which it is inseparable, it is applicable to the needs of all mankind, in all ages.

Fourthly. Because it involves an acceptable exercise of faith in God, who is pleased to provide for the wants of his children, without requiring either from themselves, or from the inferior creatures over which they rule, a perpetual succession of days of labour.

Fifthly. Because from a variety of hints contained in the history of the Patriarchs, as well as from the fact, that the observance of the sabbath was enjoined on the Israelites as a custom already recognised, it may be inferred, that previously to the Jewish law, this institution was observed by the servants of Jehovah, both before and after the flood.

Sixthly. Because the division of time into weeks prevailing among the heathen, especially among Eastern nations, (connected as it was with a notion that the seventh day of the week was holy,) confirms the antiquity and *original authority* of the sabbath.

In conclusion, it is necessary for us plainly to distinguish between the dictates of true religion and those of superstition, in reference to our present subject. I would suggest that it is unscriptural, and therefore superstitious, to imagine that a superior sanctity actually attaches to any one day of the revolving week, over others. As with Homer of old every passing day and night was sacred, much more must it be so to the christian, who knows that the presence of the God whom he worships pervades *all space*, and his Providence *all time*. Neither is it possible for us to determine the question, whether the sabbath day which

we may presume was observed by the Patriarchs, was in fact the seventh day of the week, as reckoned from the beginning of the world. It is obvious, that in the course of ages, circumstances might easily occur which would disturb the reckoning; and equally so, that this question is of no practical importance. We must not indeed forget that from the very revolution of the earth on its axis, it is impossible for all men to keep their sabbath-day at the same time.

All that we can infer from God's hallowing the seventh day, and from his instituting a sabbath for men after the model of his own—all that we can gather from the nature and reason of the case, or from the example of the Lord's servants in every age, is *this*—that in the march of time, God claims every recurring *seventh day* as peculiarly his own. In that perfect wisdom with which he adjusts all the claims of human duty in even balances, he has ordained that *this proportion of our time* should be devoted, without interruption from our temporal callings, to religious purposes. In that pure benevolence with which he seeks the happiness of mankind, and even of inferior animals; he has made (as I believe) a “perpetual decree” THAT EVERY SIX DAYS OF LABOUR shall be succeeded by a SEVENTH DAY OF REST.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE MOSAIC SABBATH.

WHEN, amidst the general corruption of mankind, God was pleased to select a single nation through whom he might preserve in the world a knowledge of his truth, he renewed that external revelation of his law, which had doubtless been bestowed on our first parents. It is probable that the Israelites, during their long continued bondage in a foreign land, had forgotten many of their most sacred traditions, and had become involved in much ignorance and darkness. The miracles therefore which preceded their departure from Egypt, and more especially that pre-eminent one wrought at the Red sea, were very important, not only as the means of their deliverance, but as fresh proofs of the truth of their paternal religion. When thus brought, as it were, into contact with the Moral Governor of the universe, and humbled under the manifestations of his power, they were prepared to receive those verbal and written communications of his will, by which their future conduct was to be regulated.

It is a remarkable fact, that the observance of the sabbath was the first moral duty which was then enjoined upon them. We have already found occasion

to remark, that when the manna was given in double quantity on the sixth day of the week, and ceased to fall on the seventh, this institution was afresh brought to their remembrance; and it was clearly manifested to them, that every recurring seventh day was thenceforth to be dedicated to a holy rest, and to the worship of God.

Afterwards, when the moral law was delivered from Mount Sinai, in the audible voice of Jehovah himself, the keeping of the sabbath was commanded as one of its essential parts, and was introduced by the term **REMEMBER**. “Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.”¹

Nothing can be more palpable than the distinction maintained in Scripture between the ten commandments thus delivered from Mount Sinai, and the civil and ceremonial institutions of the Mosaic code. The former were laws, as old as the world itself, applicable to all men, and essential to the maintenance of a true theology and of a righteous life. The latter, though mixed up with much that was moral, (or derived from these laws,) were intended for the national welfare, and adapted exclusively to the peculiar religious cir-

¹ Exod. xx, 8—11.

cumstances of the Hebrews. Accordingly, the former were pronounced by Jehovah himself, during a visible and awful display of his glory: whereas the latter were communicated to the people, only through the intervention of a human lawgiver. On the same ground, while the civil part of the law of Moses was committed to the magistrate, and the ceremonial part to the priest—and each was steadfastly maintained as important for its particular purpose—it was the moral part of that law,—it was the ten commandments both in their principles and in their detail,—on which the preachers of righteousness ever delighted to dwell. These were the constant theme of the rebukes, the intreaties, and the exhortations of the prophets.

In taking this view of the subject, it seems impossible to separate the fourth commandment from those which precede and follow it. It was delivered with the same solemnity as its fellows, and was written on the table of the covenant by the same finger. It is moreover important to observe, that it fitly concludes the first table of the covenant, and as fitly introduces the second. The first table relates to the worship of the true God. It proclaims his unity, and the sanctity of his name, and forbids all idolatry. How could it be better concluded than by the law of the sabbath, which renders the regular worship of God *practicable*, by breaking the train of our temporal pursuits, and by setting apart one day in seven for this express purpose? So also the strength of the second table, which unfolds the moral obligations of man to man, will ever be found to lie in the remembrance of the

Creator of the universe; because on his will alone are these obligations founded. Now the sabbath was the appointed means of perpetually reminding man, that he is himself a creature, and that God is his Creator and Sovereign. It was a current saying among the Talmudists, "He that denies the sabbath is like to him who denies the whole law." Rabbi Levi, of Barcelona, says that the object of the sabbath of the Israelites was, "that having no other business, they might fasten on their minds that the world had a beginning, which is a thread which draws after it all the foundations of the law.² Accordingly we find that while most of the *ceremonial* law was instituted by Moses *prospectively*, with a view of its being put into practice after the Israelites had settled in the land of Canaan, the sabbath was strictly observed, even during their journey in the wilderness.³

There is another respect in which the sabbath was considered, by the ancient Jewish doctors, to be of high practical importance. Although it has been questioned whether, in the time of Moses, the Israelites had any distinct views of the doctrine of *immortality*, yet there can be no doubt, that, as they advanced in religious knowledge, they were taught to look forward to a future state, in which the righteous should be rewarded according to their works. Now the sabbath was regarded as giving weight to the whole law of God, by *typically reminding the people of their eternal rest*. "The sabbath," say the Rabbins,

² See *Patrick* on Exod. xx, 9—12; and Numb. xv, 35.

³ Exod. xvi; Numb. xv, 32.

“was given to be a type of a future eternity.”⁴ “The precept concerning the sabbath,” says Abarbanel, “not only designates that fundamental article of the creation of the world, but points to a spiritual world, wherein will be a true rest and a substantial inheritance. There shall be our true cessation from corporeal cares and labours.”⁵

As the law of the sabbath was inseparably connected with the remainder of the decalogue, so, like the other moral laws of God, it formed a leading subject of prophetic exhortation. Isaiah appears to place “keeping the sabbath” and “keeping judgment” on the same level;⁶ and soon afterwards, he mentions the former in immediate connexion with “taking hold” of God’s “covenant.”⁷ Again, through the same prophet, JEHOVAH says, “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking (thine own) words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”⁸ With this beautiful passage may be compared the words of Jeremiah, “And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow

⁴ Vid. *Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb.* 299.

⁵ On *Exod.* xxxi, 13.

⁶ *Isa.* lvi, 2.

⁷ *Isa.* lvi, 6.

⁸ *Isa.* lviii, 13, 14.

the sabbath-day, to do no work therein, then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever.”⁹

The principle advocated in these passages is plainly this—that the seventh day was claimed by JEHOVAH as peculiarly his own—that its hours were to be devoted to rest and religion—and that it might not be diverted from its right use, for the sake either of amusement or of business. The carrying of burdens through the gates of Jerusalem, was a circumstance connected with the regular course of *trade*, and persons who continued this practice during the sabbath-day, set the law of God at defiance, by applying that period of time which he had set apart for himself, to the pursuit of temporal gain. They at once renounced their faith in Jehovah, and their obedience to his revealed will.

This part of the subject is illustrated by a passage in the history of Nehemiah, who was zealous for the whole law of God, and especially for the sabbatical institution.

“In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading asses: as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all

⁹ Jer. xvii, 24, 25.

manner of ware and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twiece. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands upon you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.”¹

We ought not to pass over this remarkable passage without observing that Nehemiah, the chief magistrate of the people, acted on this occasion, not merely as a Jew, but in the more comprehensive character of a servant of God. He was endeavouring to maintain a divine law long anterior in date to the Mosaic code, and essential to the *civil* as well as religious welfare of mankind.

But the duties of the sabbath were not merely negative. The Israelites were required, on that day especially, to *delight themselves* in the Lord. It was because of its being dedicated to the salutary and

¹ Neh. xiii, 15—21.

joyful purpose of worship, that they were to “call” that sacred day “a delight” and “honourable.” That the Jews, after their return from captivity, were accustomed to assemble in their synagogues on a sabbath-day, for the purpose of public worship, is a fact familiar to every reader of the New Testament. But, even from the first promulgation of their law, the duty of congregational worship was understood to be inseparably connected with the sabbath. Like the high days of their great festivals, each recurring seventh day was to be “a holy convocation.” The people were to meet in a large assembly, not surely as some persons have imagined, for the mere purpose of feasting, but for the holier one of prayer and praise and listening to the words of the law. “Speak unto the children of Israel,” said the Lord to Moses “concerning the feasts of the Lord which ye shall proclaim to be *holy convocations*, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done : but the seventh is a sabbath of rest—a *holy convocation*.”² That on these solemn occasions the law was publicly read, appears probable from the testimony of James, (the brother of our Lord,) who, in addressing the church at Jerusalem, said, “For Moses of OLD TIME hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.”³ The phrase rendered “of old time,” signifies “FROM THE ANCIENT GENERATIONS,”⁴ and denotes the great antiquity of the practice in question. Accordingly Josephus declares that Moses commanded the people “to remit

² Lev. xxiii, 3.

³ Acts xv, 21.

⁴ ἀπὸ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων.

their other employments every seventh day, and to *gather together for the purpose of hearing the law read and of accurately learning it.*"⁵ A similar assertion is made by Philo.⁶ In the second book of Kings we read of the "*covert for the sabbath* which they had built in the house." This covert is generally supposed to have been a splendid awning, erected in connection with the temple, under which the king sat during the time of congregational worship.⁷

It appears then that the ancient Israelites were fully aware that the religious observance of every seventh day formed a part of that higher class of their duties, which was distinguished, in the very nature of things, from every thing merely civil or ceremonial. The sabbath was ordained for their spiritual welfare; it was enforced by the most awful sanctions; it was inscribed on the tables of their covenant; it was presented to them as an essential part of the moral law of God.

While this point is so plain that it can scarcely fail to be conceded by the impartial examiner of Scripture, we ought not to forget that the sabbath, under the Mosaic economy, served certain purposes, and was marked by certain characteristics, *which had no relation except to that economy.* This article of the decalogue was applied to the Israelites on a national as well as on a more general principle, and in *such a*

⁵ ἐκάστης ἐβδομάδος τῶν ἄλλων ἔργων ἀφεμένους, ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροάσιν τοῦ νόμου ἐκέλευσε συλλέγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν. *Contra Apion.* ii, 17.

⁶ *De Vita Mosis*, lib. iii, *Jennings's Jewish Ant.* ii, 160.

⁷ Chap. xvi, 18; vide. *Gill in loc.*

form or manner as suited the peculiar circumstances under which they were placed.

1. The Mosaic sabbath was intended for a sign by which the Israelites might be distinguished from all the idolatrous nations which surrounded them. It was a visible and intelligible badge of their loyalty to the King of kings,—a public testimony, borne amidst all the heathen, to the authority of Jehovah. “Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep,” said the Lord by Moses, “for it is *a sign* between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth SANCTIFY you Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a *sign* between me and the children of Israel for ever.”⁸ So again in the book of Ezekiel, Jehovah says, “And I gave them my statutes and shewed them my judgments. Moreover, also, I gave them my sabbaths to be *a sign* between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that SANCTIFY them.”⁹

2. As the sabbath was a means of distinguishing the Israelites as the worshippers of the true God, so it was intended to remind them of the *national* redemption which Jehovah had wrought for them. As the creation of the world was the *first*, so the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, was the *second* event of which it was the appointed memorial. In the repetition made by Moses of the ten commandments, this latter event is alone alluded to in connection with

⁸ Exod. xxxi, 12—17.

⁹ Ezek. xx, 11, 12.

the sabbath, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm. THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day."¹

3. When JEHOVAH enjoined on the Israelites in the wilderness the keeping of the sabbath, he appointed a *particular day* for the purpose, and distinguished it from other days, by a cessation of the manna.² Since this event took place within a few weeks of the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and since *that* was the *national event* which the sabbath was intended to commemorate, we may reasonably conclude with Patriek, Mede,³ and other learned writers, that the day of the week thus selected for the sabbath, was the day of the passage of the Red sea.

Whether this day corresponded with that of the patriarchal sabbath, is a question involved in great doubt. On the one hand, it is remarked that the seventh day of the Hebrew week, was also the seventh—*Saturni sacra dies*—of the Greek and Roman week at the Christian era—a circumstance from which it may be inferred that the sabbath of the Jews agreed, as to its day, with that of the Patriarchs. On the other hand, it is argued, that there might not be the same correspondence between the Hebrew and heathen weeks in more ancient times; and the history of the Israelites in the wilderness is considered to contain an internal evidence that a *new day* was appointed

¹ Deut. v, 15.

² Exod. xvi, 23.

³ See *Patrick* on Exod. xvi, *Mede's Works*, book i, disc. xv.

for their sabbath. From Exodus xvi, 1, it appears that the seventh day preceding that on which the manna ceased to fall, was occupied, not by a holy rest, but by a wearisome journey in the wilderness of Sin. Now although the Israelites might have forgotten the sabbatical institution, yet as their journeys were under the direct command of JEHOVAH, it is presumed that a day thus spent could not have been that of the original sabbath.

Whatever decision, however, may be formed on this question, it is sufficiently clear that the selection of this particular day for the sabbath of the Israelites belonged to their *national* history, and was in itself a *non-essential* circumstance.

4. As the Israelitish sabbath-day was the seventh of the week, and as the Hebrews reckoned their days from evening to evening,⁴ it followed that their sabbath began on what we should call *the evening of the sixth day*, and continued until the same hour on the day following. According to the Rabbins, it commenced and terminated with the appearance of the stars.

One peculiarity which arose out of this circumstance was, that the *afternoon* of the sixth day was occupied by the duties of preparation. The sabbath was a joyful feast, and a greater supply of food was required on that day than on any other; but since the law forbade the cooking of victuals on the day itself, the last few hours of the preceding one were allotted to this object. Although no mention is made in the

⁴ See Lev. xxiii, 32.

Mosaic law of *the preparation*, the provisions of that law rendered it needful, and the practice of thus observing the sixth day afternoon, of which there is a plain notice in the gospels,⁵ was probably of very ancient date.

5. The sabbath of the Hebrews was distinguished by the performance, in the temple, of a double ceremonial; "And on the sabbath-day (thou shalt offer) two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof. This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, *beside* the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."⁶ This double service may be regarded as a figurative indication that the sabbath-day has a double claim upon us for the duties of worship. The figure is Jewish; but the lesson derived from it is applicable to the Christian.

Our Saviour, when conversing with the Jews, spoke of the priests being permitted by the law to *profane* the sabbath (or to break the rest of it) in the temple.⁷ His allusion was probably to these double sacrifices, which entailed considerable labour on the priests and Levites; especially the slaying, flaying, and cutting in pieces, of the victim, the arrangement of the wood, and the lighting of a fire. The preparation and setting in order of the *shew-bread*, was another of the sacerdotal offices which was performed every sabbath-day.⁸ On that day, also, the courses of the priests

⁵ Matt. xxvii, 62; Mark xv, 42, &c.

⁶ Numb. xxviii, 9, 10.

⁷ Matt. xii, 5.

⁸ Lev. xxiv, 8; 1 Chron. ix, 32.

and Levites underwent their weekly change.⁹ The obvious ground of these provisions was, that the work performed in the temple coincided with the main purpose of the sabbath—that of the honour and worship of God—and therefore, although a literal exception to the fourth commandment, involved no breach of its intention and spirit.

6. Under the Mosaic economy the sabbatical principle took a wider range than appears to have been enjoined or authorized by the original law. Not only was every seventh day to be a day of rest, but during the whole of every seventh year (reckoned, as is supposed, from the month Tizri, or September) the Israelites were to cease from agricultural labour. They and their land were to keep holy day; and the natural productions of their fields were to be the portion only of the poor. At the same period, every debt was to be cancelled, and every Hebrew slave restored to freedom; and the whole population was to unite in praising and blessing God. The observance of the sabbatical year was inseparably connected with the peculiar dispensation under which the Israelites lived. That dispensation was one of miracles. It was also one of temporal rewards and punishments. By a miracle of regular recurrence, every sixth year was to be made doubly fruitful; and on condition of obedience to this command, the Israelites were to be blessed with great temporal prosperity. This was a point, however, respecting which their faith failed them, and during a long period of their history, they utterly neglected their sabbatical year. The conse-

⁹ Vide *Maimonides*, in *Gill* on Luke i, 5.

quenee was, that they were punished with banishment into the land of their enemies, and their own land was left to “enjoy her sabbaths” in a state of ruin and desolation.¹

Another extension of the sabbatical principle under the law of Moses, was the appointment of one day or more of holy rest during each of their great festivals, the Passover, and the feasts of weeks, trumpets, and tabernacles. On these high days, there was held, as well as on the usual sabbath, “a holy convocation,” and no *servile work* was permitted to be done in them. This prohibition did not exclude the preparation of food. But on the great day of atonement—the tenth of the seventh month—no work *at all* was allowed, and the sabbath was kept *fully*.² It was probably in allusion to these well known holy days that the Jewish festivals were sometimes designated by the general name of “*sabbaths*.”

7. Lastly, the sabbath-day, under the law of Moses, was required to be observed with a *strictness*, and the breach of it was punished with a *severity*, which may fairly be regarded as appertaining solely to the dispensation then in force. The commandment, “In it thou shalt not do any work,” &c. as interpreted by the law, was far more rigid and comprehensive than it is possible for us to regard it as it is interpreted by the gospel. Although our Saviour, the Lord of the sabbath, made a clear exception in favour of works of merey and necessity, it may be questioned whether

¹ See Lev. xxvi, 34, 35, 43; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 21.

² Lev. xxiii, 31.

such an exception (unless within narrow limits) was either contemplated by Moses, or maintained by his followers.

The strictness of the institution among the ancient Hebrews, is marked by some particular injunctions contained in the Pentateuch. One of these accompanied the earliest recognition of the sabbath, after the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. "Abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the sabbath-day."³ In their interpretation of this precept, the Rabbins made allowance for the distance which an Israelite would be required to pass over, in walking from the extremity of the camp to the "tabernacle of the congregation;" but they determined that no Jew might move from his house on the sabbath-day, more than the space which they conceived to have been necessary for this purpose. This they presumed to be *two thousand cubits*—a space which was afterwards familiarly known by the name of *a sabbath-day's journey*.⁴ In the Chaldee Targum on Ruth, we read, "Naomi said unto Ruth, we are commanded to keep the sabbath, and good days, and not to go above two thousand cubits."⁵ When our Saviour commanded his disciples to pray that their flight from Jerusalem might not be on the sabbath-day,⁶ he appears to have glanced at the probability, that a rigorous application of the sabbatical law, might prevent their fleeing on that day more than a single mile, even for the purpose of escaping from their enemies.⁷

³ Exod. xvi, 29.

⁴ Acts i, 12.

⁵ Targ. Ruth i, 16.

⁶ Matt. xxiv, 20.

⁷ Vide *Gill in loc.*

Another injunction was, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your generations on the seventh day."⁸ The principal meaning of this command might probably be, that no food should be dressed on the sabbath; yet the Law gave no authority for the distinction which was afterwards made among the Jews, that a fire might be lighted on the sabbath, for the purpose of warmth, though not for that of cooking.⁹

A striking instance is recorded in the Mosaic history, of the severity with which a breach of this part of the sabbatical law was punished. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that *gathered sticks* upon the sabbath-day. And they that found him gathering sticks, brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him: And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses."¹ The doubt evinced on this occasion by Moses and Aaron, is supposed to have had relation only to the *mode* of this transgressor's death; for the law which enacted capital punishment for the crime of sabbath-breaking, had already been pronounced with reiterated solemnity: "Ye shall keep the sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one

⁸ Exod. xxxv, 3.

⁹ Vide *Gill in loc.*

¹ Numb. xv, 32—36.

that defileth it shall *surely be put to death*: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”² “Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day, there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall *be put to death*.”³

It appears to have been a principle maintained under the Mosaic dispensation, that every breach of the law, being a sin against God, deserved the punishment of death. Venial and ceremonial transgressions were purged by sacrifice, and the appointed victim bled in the room of the offender. But crimes of a deeper dye, and especially those which involved deliberate rebellion against God, were actually punished with death.⁴ The man who gathered sticks on the sabbath appears to have been regarded as a “presumptuous” offender, who by a significant act *denied the authority of his Creator*. He was accordingly punished with the same death as was inflicted on blasphemers against JEHOVAH.⁵

Now, while the severity thus exercised in the punishment of a deliberate breach of the sabbath, affords a fresh proof of the moral and spiritual nature of that institution, every one must perceive that this severity itself forms no part of God’s unchanging law, but belonged exclusively to the Mosaic dispensation. It appertained to the peculiar character of the “letter” which “killeth.”⁶

² Exod. xxxi, 14.

³ Exod. xxxv, 2.

⁴ Numb. xv, 30.

⁵ Lev. xxiv, 16.

⁶ 2 Cor. iii, 6.

On a general review of this branch of our subject, the reader will observe—1. That the sabbath, after having been enjoined on the Israelites in the wilderness, was again brought to their *remembrance*, in the fourth commandment, as an essential article of their moral law—that it was inseparably connected both with the first and with the second table of their covenant—that it gave the whole law a peculiar sanction, by reminding them of eternity to come—that like the rest of the ten commandments, and even above the rest, it was the subject of the emphatic and fervid ministry of their prophets—and lastly, that it was broadly marked by a cessation from temporal concerns, and by the delightful practice of congregational worship.

2. That this institution nevertheless served *peculiar* purposes, and was distinguished by *peculiar* marks, under the Mosaic economy. It was a sign to separate the Israelites from all other nations. It was a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt. It was fixed, for this particular reason, on the seventh day of the week. It commenced and terminated with the evening hour, and was preceded by a stated period of preparation. It was distinguished by a double ceremonial of sacrifice. Its principle was extended to every seventh year, and to all the Jewish festivals. Lastly, it was required to be observed with a *legal* strictness, and the breach of it was punished with a *legal* severity.

I conceive that the distinction between these two branches of the Mosaic sabbatical code is clear and

palpable. The former branch contains a law which has been binding on man in all ages, and under the influence of the gospel must flourish with fresh vigour. The latter branch was in its nature temporary, and under the same influence, has withered away for ever.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE JEWISH SABBATH AT THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

THE law of God is declared by the apostle Paul to be “spiritual;”¹ by which term we may understand, that it is intended to regulate not the outward conduct only, but the condition of the heart and the motives for action. The word “spiritual,” in this point of view, applies to the fourth with the same propriety as to the other nine commandments. The law of the sabbath, in its true intention, demands not merely the external practices of ceasing from labour, and of assembling for public worship, but a disentanglement of the *mind* from temporal objects, a devotion of the soul to God, and a cordial pursuit of heavenly and eternal things. Thus alone can we “keep” the sabbath “holy;”² and thus alone can we ourselves be “*sanctified*”³ in the use of it. Hence it follows that the fourth commandment might at once be rigidly observed as to its letter, and grievously infringed as to its spirit: and this appears to have been the case among the Jews at the Christian era.

A remarkable revolution had taken place in the character of that people since their return from cap-

¹ Rom. vii, 14.

² Exod. xx, 8.

³ Exod. xxxi, 13.

tivity in Babylon. Idolatry was no longer their temptation, but they prided themselves in the superiority of their religion to that of other nations. The worship of one God was their *boast*, although their hearts were far from him; and while they were exact in maintaining the outward framework of that worship, they became in their conduct remarkably degenerate and corrupt. While vice abounded, superstition increased, and to the law of God were added a multitude of unauthorised traditions. The Scribes and Pharisees especially, gave tithes of mint and anise and cummin, while they omitted "the weightier matters of the law, mercy, judgment, and faith."⁴ They were like whited sepulchres, fair on the outside, but within "full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."⁵

It was easy for such persons, and it very well served their purpose, to keep the sabbath with great outward strictness; and from various passages in the New Testament it may be inferred, that there was no part of the Mosaic code on which it was more their custom to insist. Neither was there any which had become more mixed up with their own traditions.

From the history of the Maccabees it appears, that long before the coming of Christ, the sabbath was observed with a superstitious severity. When Antiochus Epiphanes (B. C. 168) oppressed and defiled Jerusalem, a thousand Jews, who refused to comply with his wicked designs, fled from the city into the wilderness, and there they suffered themselves to be cut to pieces without the slightest resistance, solely

⁴ Matt. xxiii, 23.

⁵ Matt. xxiii, 27

because their enemies attacked them on the sabbath-day.⁶ After this event Mattathias and his followers determined that self-defence on the sabbath-day should be considered lawful—a principle which was acted on with success by Judas Maccabæus. Nevertheless, since no efforts even to resist an enemy were allowed on that day, except in case of an actual attack, nothing might be done on the sabbath to impede the enemy's works. When Pompey, the Roman general, besieged Jerusalem, he availed himself of this superstition, and took care to occupy the sabbath-day, not by any attack on the Jews, but solely in the erection of his works. Having, in consequence, completed these without interruption, he afterwards had little difficulty in storming the sacred city.⁷

The following is a brief account of the manner in which the early Jews observed the sabbath.

The *preparation*, which began on the sixth day of the week, after the evening sacrifice (that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon,) was ushered in by two soundings of horns or trumpets: the one to distinguish the common day from the holy day which was now approaching, and the other to give notice to the people that their usual employments were to cease. Tailors and shoemakers, indeed, were allowed to pursue their callings during half the hours of preparation, and so also were the scribes; the two former that they might dress the bodies, and the last that they might the better instruct the minds of their brethren, on

⁶ 1 Maccabees ii, 34—38.

⁷ *Josephus, Antiq. lib. xiv, cap. iv, sec. 2—4.*

the sabbath. With this exception, all work was now suspended but that of *preparation*, which consisted partly in cleaning their houses and washing their persons, that they might meet the sabbath with decency, and partly in preparing the excellent meals on which they were to regale during the sacred day. In these pious labours (as they were esteemed) all hands were employed, and it became the joint task of master and servant, mistress and handmaid, parent and child, to sweep the floors, cleave the wood, light the fires, chop the herbs, and prepare the viands. During the same afternoon, no journey might be undertaken which would not terminate before sunset; and all proceedings affecting life and death were suspended in the courts of justice.⁸

About six o'clock in the evening, when the sun was near setting, the sabbath commenced, and the trumpets were blown from that covered place by the temple, where the king sat in the congregations.⁹ This was the signal for lighting the sabbatical lamps in their houses—an office which devolved on the women of every family, who were also required to keep the lamps burning during the whole sabbath. The practice of lighting and keeping alive the sabbatical lamps was enjoined upon *all* the Jews; on the poor who were obliged to beg for oil, as well as on the rich who possessed it in abundance; and no wonder; for

⁸ By a decree of Augustus the Roman emperor, the Jews were exempt from summons into any court of justice from three o'clock on the sixth day afternoon, until the sabbath was over. *Lewis, Origines Heb.* vol. ii, p. 577.

⁹ 2 Kings xvi, 18.

this, according to their notions, was the proper method of fulfilling the precept, "Thou shalt call the sabbath a *delight and honourable.*"¹

On a similar principle they considered that they fulfilled the command to "*hallow the sabbath-day,*" by pronouncing at their first sabbatical meal (eaten at the commencement of the sabbath) a form of words which they called *kiddush*, or *sanctification*. They always partook of three meals on the sabbath, and thought themselves obliged to do so in honour of the day. Even the poor who lived upon alms were bound to eat three times, and the rich feasted deliciously. All were dressed in the best clothes which they could command, and these were called "*sabbatical garments.*"

The first duty of the morning was to attend on public prayer in the synagogues; after which service they ate their second meal. When this meal was concluded, they frequently occupied themselves with going to hear a discourse on divinity from some one of their scribes or doctors. In the afternoon the festive board was again spread, and they continued eating and drinking until three stars of considerable magnitude became visible in the firmament. This was the established sign of the departure of the sabbath; spices were then prepared in each family, for the refreshment of those who might faint for sorrow at the termination of so joyful a day; and over these spices the master of every house pronounced what they called *habdalah*, that is *the blessing of separation*. Thus the ceremonies of the day were concluded.²

¹ Isa. lviii, 13.

² See *Lewis, Origines Heb.* book iv, ch. 16.

We have already remarked, that in the temple, a double service of sacrifice was required on the sabbath. This service was accompanied, morning and evening, by three blasts of the trumpet beyond what was usual on other days; and in the morning the priests sung the song of Moses in Deuteronomy³—a sixth part every week; in the evening, the song of Moses in Exodus.⁴

With respect to the command which forbid all manner of work on the sabbath-day, the Jews, under the influence of their traditions, were exceedingly punctilious in the observance of it; and some of the decrees of the rabbinical doctors in reference to this subject are frivolous in the extreme. They advanced as many as thirty-nine negative precepts respecting things which might not be done on the sabbath, and these precepts severally branched out into various minor details. For example, a man might not thresh on the sabbath; neither might he walk on the grass, so as to bruise it, which was a kind of threshing. Again, a man might not hunt on the sabbath; neither might he catch a flea while it hops about, which is a kind of hunting.⁵

Our Saviour asked the Jews which of them would not on the sabbath-day lead his ox or his ass to the watering, or pull out his sheep from a pit into which it might have fallen?⁶ From these questions we may conclude, that whatever the Jews might profess, they

³ Deut. xxxii.

⁴ Exod. xv.

⁵ See *Jennings' Jewish Antiq.* book iii, c. iii, vol. 2. p. 157.

⁶ Luke xiii, 15; Matt. xii, 11.

did not, in practice, hesitate to perform works of necessity on the sabbath, for the sake of their own advantage. The Rabbins, however, have instituted some curious distinctions in reference to these points. According to them, a man might fill a trough with water on the sabbath, that his beasts might *come* and drink, but he might not convey it to the place where the animals were standing.⁷ So also, if a beast fell into a ditch or pool of water on the sabbath, a man might feed it *there*, in order to save its life; and if it was so placed as not to be able to feed, he might put bolsters under it, that if it could come out, it might do so of its own accord; but he might not pull it out *with his hand*.⁸ Another rabbinical precept was aimed against all attempts on the sabbath to cure *chronic* complaints. A man afflicted with a diseased eye might plaister it on the sabbath for the sake of ease and pleasure, but not for the purpose of healing!⁹

Such was the Jewish sabbath, and such the superstitions with which it was encumbered. There is reason to believe that the religious opinions of the Jews underwent scarcely any change during several centuries after the Christian era. Although, therefore, a few of these superstitions probably arose among the Rabbins in later times, the general account now given may be considered as applying to the period when Jesus Christ was upon earth. The substance

⁷ *T. Bab. Erubin*, fol. 202; *Gill* on Luke xiii.

⁸ *Maimonides, Hilchot Sab.* cap. xxv, sec. 26; *Lightfoot and Gill* on Matt. xii.

⁹ *Piske Tosephat Sab.* art. 67; *Gill* on John ix, 16.

of the statement is indeed amply confirmed by the evidence of the evangelists themselves. In the midst of a deep national corruption, and while true piety and virtue were at a low ebb, the forms of religion were multiplied, and were observed with a studious exactness. Such a scene ought not to be contemplated without instruction. It may remind us of the ever watchful craft of our soul's adversary, who leaves no stone unturned to bring us under his power. Behold the Israelites, during one period of their history, neglecting the peculiarities of their ritual worship, despising their sabbath, and plunging into idolatry! Behold them, at another period, strict in the performance of all their ceremonies, *cavicaturing* their sabbath by the superstitious observance of it, boasting of their faith in the unity of God, yet destitute of the life of religion, and sunk in immorality!

We have now to enter upon a question of vital importance to our subject. What were the principles in relation to the sabbath, which JESUS CHRIST maintained in his own conduct and doctrine?

In pursuing this enquiry, we must of course keep in view the circumstances which have now been detailed, and especially the *condition of the Jewish mind* with regard to this institution, at the time when our Saviour was on earth. We must not expect to find him insisting on an external duty, which the people amongst whom he lived were already in the habit of punctiliously observing. We might rather presume that he would be found rebuking them for their dependence on the mere forms of religion—directing their

attention to its substance—and declaring, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.”

Such, we know, was the fact. But while our blessed Lord discountenanced all superstitious notions respecting the sabbath, and even relaxed that legal strictness which hung about the fourth commandment under the Mosaic dispensation, he maintained the substance of that commandment in all its integrity.

Every one who is familiar with the ministry of JESUS as recorded by the evangelists, must be aware how carefully he guarded the *whole* moral law of God. There can be no question that he was speaking of *this* law, contained as it was in the ten commandments, and inscribed on the tables of the covenant, when he said, “Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle* shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”¹ Again, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”²

It seems impossible to avoid concluding from these passages that the whole moral code, as it had been revealed to the Israelites, was to remain in unimpaired authority to the end of time; nor does there appear to be any good reason why the principle here laid down by our Saviour, should not apply to the fourth as well as to the other nine commandments. When

¹ Matt. v, 18, 19.

² Luke xvi, 17.

the ruler asked him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" our Lord referred him to "the commandments;" and although he then spoke of the *second table* only, he virtually sanctioned them all.³ This also was the case when the scribe came to him and enquired, "Which is the first commandment of all?"⁴ for who can doubt that our Lord intended to comprehend the whole of the two tables of the covenant, when he stated the great commandments of love to God, and love to our neighbour? The neglect of the sabbath would break the first of these commandments, just as theft or adultery would break the second; and when the scribe distinguished these moral duties from all things merely ceremonial—from "all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices"—Jesus perceived that "he answered discreetly,"⁵ and said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."⁶

As our blessed Lord, in his doctrine, maintained the integrity of the moral law, so in his life and conversation, he fulfilled "all righteousness." In order to this end, he submitted even to the ceremonial ordinances which were then in force,⁷ and who will dare to question his having kept the whole of the ten commandments, according to their true meaning and spirit absolutely inviolate? Of his fulfilment of the chief duty of the sabbath, we have abundant evidence;

³ Luke xviii, 20; *comp.* Matt. xix, 16; Mark x, 17.

⁴ Mark xii, 28.

⁵ *σοφως ἀποκρίθη.*

⁶ That the apostles, after the example of their Master, maintained the authority of the moral law, as contained in the ten commandments, is evident from Rom. xiii, 9; Eph. vi, 2; Gal. v, 14; James ii, 10, &c.

⁷ Matt. iii, 15.

for various occasions are mentioned by the evangelists, on which he attended the worship of God in the synagogues; and from a statement made by Luke, we learn that this was his *regular habit*. “And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up; and, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.”⁸ Neither did our Saviour refuse to participate in those sabbatical meals which were then customary among the Jews—the sabbath being, by divine authority, one of their feasts. He was eating bread in the Pharisee’s house, on the sabbath-day, when he healed the man who was afflicted with the dropsy.⁹

Many of his most remarkable miracles were performed on the sabbath—the healing of Peter’s wife’s mother;¹ the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda;² the gift of sight to a man born blind;³ the restoration of the withered hand;⁴ and lastly, the instantaneous recovery of the woman who had been bowed together with infirmity for eighteen years.⁵ In selecting the sabbath and its solemn occasions of worship for these acts, our Saviour may well be deemed to have had a double object in view—first, to refute the idle notion of the Jews that it was not lawful to heal the sick on the sabbath-day,⁶ and to establish

⁸ Luke iv, 16; *comp.* ver. 31; Mark vi, 2, &c.

⁹ Luke xiv, 1—6.

¹ Luke iv, 38—41.

² John v.

³ John ix.

⁴ Matt. xii, 13.

⁵ Luke xiii, 10—13.

⁶ No Christian will, I presume, question the lawfulness of healing the sick on the sabbath-day. Yet the *medical practitioner* who pursues his calling during the whole of that day, and habitually neglects the duty of divine worship, must surely be regarded as a breaker of the sabbath. He will find nothing to justify his conduct in the example or in the precepts of the Saviour of men.

the principle that to do good is always lawful: secondly, to celebrate the day and do it honour, by these glorious exertions of his benevolence and power.

All these histories are full of interest and instruction; but in order to obtain a correct view of our Saviour's deportment and doctrine on such occasions, it may suffice to select two of them for more detailed observation. The man who lay at the pool of Bethesda amidst a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, and withered, had been afflicted with an infirmity for thirty and eight years.—His cure was public and immediate. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk: and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk."⁷

Between that carrying of burdens which belonged to the course of trade, and which was so severely reprobated by the prophets as a breach of the sabbath, and the bearing away of the mattress on which this poor man was lying, and which might otherwise have been lost to him, the distinction is too obvious to need discussion.⁸ Still, the deed was a breach of the law of Moses according to its *literal exactness*, and

⁷ John v, 5—11.

⁸ We are informed by modern travellers, that the beds used in the East are light and portable, often consisting of a mattress laid on the floor, with a single covering. These, during the day, are rolled up, and placed in a cupboard. The poor mendicant proba-

was, as well as the act of healing a chronic disease, directly opposed to the notions then prevalent among the Jews. "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day."⁹ The answer of Jesus is sublime indeed. He condescends not to rebut the charge that he had broken the sabbath—a charge depending on a rigorous interpretation of the letter of the law—but cuts the whole matter short by an expressive allusion to his own divinity. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."¹—As God the Father, who rested on the seventh day after the original creation, is perpetually at work in the maintenance and reproduction of all things natural, and in conducting the scheme of Providence,—so the Son also, in the plentitude of his power and goodness, is ever *acting* for the benefit of mankind, and for the healing and protection of his believing children. No wonder that "the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, *making himself equal with God.*"²

Still greater light however is thrown on this subject, by the circumstances of another sabbath-day in our Lord's history. He and his disciples were pass-

bly would find his wretched pallet a very easy load. See *Harmer's Observ.* vol. ii, p. 66. It is evident, however, that notwithstanding this distinction, the Jews, on this occasion, considered the sabbath to be broken. Accordingly in the Mishnah we read, "he that rolls up a bed of the braziers or tinkers on the sabbath-day, is bound in a sin offering." *Sabbat.* cap. 10, sec. 3. *Gill in loc.*

⁹ John v, 16.

¹ John v, 17.

² John v, 18.

ing through a corn field, and his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn, to rub them in their hands, and to eat. The Pharisees saw it and said, "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-day." According to their notions, to eat on that day was of course lawful, but to pluck the ears of corn and to rub them was unlawful; nor was their objection without some foundation in the law of Moses, which is universally understood to have forbidden the preparation of food on the sabbath.³ On this occasion, as on the former, our Lord made an appeal to his own divine authority. "Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are blameless. But I say unto you that in this place is *One greater than the temple*. But, if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless; for the son of man is *Lord even of the sabbath-day*."⁴

The disciples, when they plucked and rubbed the ears of corn, were as guiltless in the sight of God, as

³ See Exod. xxxv, 3. The distinction between those holy days in which no "*servile* work might be done," and the weekly sabbaths and great day of atonement, in which a man might do "*no manner of work*," was chiefly that, in the former, food might be prepared; in the latter, *it might not*.

⁴ Matt. xii, 1—8.

David was when he ate the shew bread with his companions, and as the priests were, who wrought in the temple during the sabbath-day. David was excused for a breach of the letter of the law by the necessity of his case, and by the peculiar providence which guided and protected him.⁵ The priests were justified by the religious nature of their calling, as well as by the plain directions of the law itself. On behalf of the disciples it might have been pleaded, that the manner in which they prepared their food, could scarcely be said to involve "any work;" but it sufficed for them, that they acted with the sanction of their Master, who, in his divine nature, was "greater than the temple"—far exalted above the whole system of Jewish worship—and LORD even of the SABBATH-DAY.

In him there dwelt an authority, which sufficed not merely for the lenient and merciful interpretation of the sabbatical law, or for the relaxing of its literal rigour, but even, should he see meet, for its total abolition.

But while Jesus demanded "mercy and not sacrifice," he maintained the law of God in all its spiritual intent—in all its genuine vigour. There is nothing in this transaction, or in any similar one recorded in the New Testament, which weakens the fourth command-

⁵ At first sight it appears remarkable, that David's *eating the shew bread* should be mentioned in reference to a question respecting the *sabbath*. On examination, however, it appears, that the transaction took place on the sabbath-day; for the loaves which Ahimelech gave to David, were the old ones, which he was then exchanging for bread newly made. Now this change took place on the sabbath. See 1 Sam. xxi, 6; *comp.* Lev. xxiv, 8.

ment, as reasonably interpreted, and as forming a constituent part of the "perfect law of liberty."⁶ This observation is confirmed by the remainder of the narrative. "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue; and behold there was a man which had his hand withered; and they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore *it is lawful* to do well on the sabbath-days. Then said he to the man, stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like the other."⁷ Here it is evident that while our Lord makes an allowance for works of *necessity*, and by his glorious example invites to works of *mercy*, on the sabbath-day; he places both on the simple ground of their *lawfulness*, and thus maintains *the law* inviolate.

It appears then—First, that at the time when our Saviour was on earth, the Jews were no longer prone to the neglect of any outward rite, but were strong in the forms of religion, though not in its power.

Secondly, that in this spirit they punctiliously observed the sabbath, with a variety of curious ceremonies, and under many superstitious notions.

Thirdly, that while our Saviour rebuked their formality, contradicted their superstitions, and even relaxed the literal rigour of their law, he maintained

6 James i, 25.

7 Matt. xii, 9—13.

that law in its substance and spirit; by his support of the ten commandments in general—by his customary attendance of the synagogue worship—and by a frequently implied acknowledgment of the obligation of the sabbath, within its true scope.

The evangelist Mark has recorded another of our Lord's sayings, a brief view of which may fitly conclude the discussion of this branch of our subject. "THE SABBATH," said Jesus, "WAS MADE FOR MAN, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH."⁸

When the Jews gave their chief attention to the literal and outward fulfilment of the sabbatical law—when they added to that law very numerous traditions of their own—when they carried their superstitions on the subject into frivolous and childish absurdities—when they strained at the "gnat" in this matter, while in others they were swallowing the "camel"—they acted as if *man was made for the sabbath*. But their error was radical; they mistook the very nature and principle of the divine commandments. The sabbath, like every other part of the moral law of God, was made for *man*—not for the Jew alone, but *for our species*. It is a gift bestowed upon us, in perfect wisdom and pure benevolence, for the refreshment of our bodies, and for the improvement of our souls—for enabling us to commune at leisure with our God and Father—for promoting our piety, our virtue, and our happiness.

⁸ Mark ii, 27.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

SUFFICIENT proof, I trust, has now been adduced, that a weekly sabbath was ordained from the beginning of the world for the welfare of mankind—that among the ancient Israelites, this general law was carefully maintained, with the addition of some peculiar provisions—and that although our Saviour rebuked the folly of Jewish superstition, in relation to the sabbath, and even relaxed the strictness of the Mosaic precept, he gave his clear sanction to the institution itself.

How then are we to observe the sabbath under the Christian dispensation? Not as a rite accompanied with Jewish ceremonies, and guarded with a legal severity, but in its original simplicity, and in Christian liberty,—in such a manner as will best remind us of the blessings bestowed on man, through the coming of our Redeemer.

Within half a century of the death of Christ, the national polity of the Jews was brought to its termination. Their city and temple were destroyed, their priesthood abrogated, and the people, though destined in all ages to be marked and separate, were scattered among Gentile nations, over the face of the earth.

This therefore was the end of their *civil law*. With respect to their *ceremonial law*, all Christians allow that the whole of it was virtually abolished, when the great Antitype had offered up himself on the cross, as an atonement for the sins of the world. Now the *law of the sabbath* was differently circumstanced from any other part of the Mosaic institutions. It assumed a mixed character. In its main features it belonged to an unalterable moral code. In other particulars, it bore merely a Jewish and ceremonial character. In the former respect therefore it continues unchanged; in the latter, its authority died away with the peculiar dispensation to which it belonged.

Although these conclusions are derived from clear premises, yet in point of fact the change from the Mosaic to the christian sabbath was a gradual work. The Jews who believed in Christ were very slow to give up the practices of their ancestors, and, under their influence, even the Gentile believers were prone to forsake the true ground of the Christian's hope, and to place their dependence on the ceremonies of an obsolete law. It was by degrees only—as the light of the gospel more and more abounded—that the primitive Christians escaped from all the shackles of Judaism, and rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

As a matter of course, therefore, the Jewish believers in the earliest age of Christianity, continued (as Ignatius expresses it) to *sabbatize*; ¹ and it is probable that many of their Gentile brethren were accus-

¹ *Ep. ad Magnes.* cap. 9.

tomed to the same practice. Whatsoever religious service any other day of the week might bring with it, they kept the seventh day as their sabbath, and observed it with those ceremonial forms and that legal strictness which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation. In the mean time, however, the Christian sabbath was arising from a sure foundation, lifting up its head by degrees above the Jewish ritual, and putting in an irresistible claim on the regard and attention of all believers in Jesus.

Our Lord, with a criminal on either side of him, was crucified on the sixth day of the week, and at the time of his death, the preparation for the ensuing sabbath was just commencing. Under these circumstances, the Jews, who in the very depth of their most flagrant national crime, were zealous for the letter of the law, besought Pilate that the legs of the sufferers might be broken, and their bodies removed from the cross much more speedily than was customary among the Romans. They were full of anxiety lest the sabbath should be polluted. Even Mary Magdalene and her two friends, who had prepared sweet spices to anoint the body of their Lord, dutifully observed the sabbath, and kept back their tribute of pious affection until the following morning.² That sabbath-day was indeed one of no common dignity; for it occurred during the passover week, and being the second day of the feast—the 16th of Nisan—was distinguished by the solemn wave-offering before the Lord, of the first sheaf of the Jewish harvest.³

² Mark xvi, 1, &c.

³ Lev. xxiii, 10; John xix, 31.

But although this was a “high day,” one of peculiar celebrity and joyfulness, to the Jews in general—to the disciples of Jesus it was a day of sorrow, darkness, and dismay. They had forsaken their Master in the hour of extreme danger, and were now scattered and hidden. Their expectation of the glorious reign of their Messiah had been utterly disappointed. The proofs which he had displayed, of his divine power, had given place, as they imagined, to his defeat and destruction. The Lord of life and glory, whom they had confessed to be the Son of God, appeared to have become a prey to his enemies. He had undergone a cruel and shameful death. His body was laid in the sepulchre, and all their faith and hope were buried with him. How dark a day in their calendar was their sabbath-day become! Nor can it be forgotten by Christians, in any age of the church, that it was during the seventh day of the week—the old sabbath of the Jews—that our glorious Head and Saviour continued under the dominion of *death and the grave*. No wonder that this should cease to be the appointed period for the *festal worship* of God’s children!

But what a glorious morning was that which next dawned on the infant church of Christ—the morning of *the first day of the week*. The women, who went at a very early hour to the sepulchre, found no dead body there; but in the place of it, two angels sitting, clothed in white raiment, who told them that their Lord was risen.⁴ He had broken the bands of death asunder, and had triumphed over the grave. The

⁴ John xx, 12.

Sun of righteousness who had been hidden, even from the eye of faith, during a dark night of sorrow, was again appearing in his native splendour. As God the Father hallowed the seventh day on which he rested, and marked it for his own—as the “birth-day” of the world—so the Son of God was now distinguishing with peculiar honour the day of the *new creation*, on which his lowest humiliation was exchanged for victory, and the atonement made for sin triumphantly confirmed.⁵

Four times on that day he condescended to manifest himself to his followers; first to the women who “held him by his feet and worshipped him;”⁶ next to Peter;⁷ then to the two disciples, whose hearts burned within them, as he talked with them on the way to Emmaus, and to whom he was revealed in the breaking of bread;⁸ and lastly to a company of ten of his apostles: “Then the same day in the evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”⁹ On this occasion was for the first time fulfilled the gracious declaration of Jesus to his disciples,

⁵ Rom. iv, 25.

⁶ Matt. xxviii, 9.

⁷ Luke xxiv, 34.

⁸ Luke xxiv, 13—33.

⁹ John xx, 19—22.

that where they were gathered together in his name, *there would he be "in the midst of them."*¹ Then also was another of his promises accomplished: "*I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*"²

Thus arose and thus concluded the first Christian sabbath. And when was the second? According to the original law, by which every recurring seventh day was hallowed, it must of course have taken place on that day se'nnight. Accordingly, it appears that the apostles were then again gathered together in one company. "*And after eight days again his disciples were within and Thomas with them: then came Jesus and stood in the midst, the doors being shut, and said, Peace be unto you.*"³

When any circumstance occurred, a week after another, the Jews were accustomed to call this interval of time, "an eight days," including in their reckoning, both the days which were the objects of notice. Such particularly was the style of Josephus.⁴ Since therefore the first appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples was on the first day of one week, it follows that his second appearance is here described as occurring on the same day of the week succeeding.

¹ Matt. xviii, 20. ² John vi, 22. ³ John xx, 26.

⁴ "The phrase *μετ' ἡμέρας ὀκτώ* signifies after another week. So the Jews express a week by *eight days*. So Josephus, *Ant. lib. vii, cap. 9*, having said *ἐπι ἡμέρας ὀκτώ*, (every eight days) presently explains it by *ἀπὸ σαββάτου ἐπὶ σάββατον*, (from week to week.") *Hammond* in loc. So *Grotius, Gill, &c. &c.* In like manner the French call a fortnight, *quinze jours*. A similar idiom occurs in *Luke ix, 28. Comp. Matt. xvii, 1, and Mark ix, 2.*

How memorable was the conversation which, on this latter occasion, took place between the LORD and his apostle Thomas! "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."⁵

A third occasion on which the disciples came together after the resurrection of Christ, was that on which the Lord himself assembled with them at Bethany, or on Mount Olivet—a meeting which terminated with his *glorious ascension*.⁶

The period which elapsed between our Lord's resurrection and ascension, is described as "forty days."⁷ This is a period of which frequent mention is made in the sacred history. The flood was "forty days" upon the earth; Moses was "forty days" in the mount; Elijah went "forty days" in the strength of the meat which the angel provided for him; Christ fasted "forty days" in the wilderness. Now as the Hebrews were accustomed to reckon their time by weeks—from sabbath to sabbath—it seems probable that the term "forty days" may be a mere synonyme for "*five sabbaths or weeks*."⁸ If so, the ascension

⁵ John xx, 29. ⁶ Acts i, 4—12. ⁷ Acts i, 3.

⁸ "An eight days" and "a week" being synonymous, "forty days" are a week *five times* repeated, each sabbath-day being twice reckoned in the enumeration.

took place five weeks after the resurrection, and therefore on the first day of the week. This probability is in some measure confirmed by the fact, that the disciples were then assembled: for not only do we find them meeting together on the first day of the week twice before this event, but we shall presently see that they maintained the same practice *on the very week following*.

How blessed and solemn must have been this last meeting of Jesus with his chosen followers! It was then that he gave them his final commission to go and preach the gospel to all nations, cheered them with the promise of his perpetual presence, and declared that they should be baptized with the HOLY GHOST “*not many days*” afterwards.⁹ “And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”¹

The disciples were commanded by their Lord to tarry at Jerusalem until they were “endued with power from on high.” The period during which they had to wait for the promise of the Father, appears to have been exactly one week, and in the course of it they appointed Matthias to the apostleship, in the place of Judas. From the history of that transaction, it appears that the infant church then consisted of one hundred and twenty persons. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, *they were all with one accord in one place.*”²

⁹ Acts i, 5—8.

¹ Luke xxiv, 51—53.

² Acts ii, 1.

Now it is certain that this renewed assembly of the believers took place on the "Lord's day"—the first of the week—on which, in that year, the Pentecost occurred. The reckoning which proves this fact is very simple. Our Saviour's last paschal supper was on the evening which terminated, or, (according to the reckoning of the Jews,) *succeeded*, the fifth day of the week. That fifth day was the 14th of Nisan, on which the passover was slain.³ He was crucified on the sixth day; and the following *seventh day* was, as we have already remarked, the second of the feast and the 16th of Nisan, on which the wave-sheaf was offered to the Lord. Now from the time of this solemnity, seven *complete* weeks were to be numbered; and the day which followed was the fiftieth day, *or the Pentecost*, on which was celebrated the feast of the first fruits. "From the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering seven sabbaths (or weeks) shall be *complete*:⁴ even unto *the morrow after the seventh sabbath* shall ye number *fifty days*; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord."⁵

Since, in the present instance, the wave offering was on the sabbath-day, the appointed interval did not expire until the termination of that day *seven weeks*. At six o'clock in the evening, when the seventh sabbath-day went out, the Pentecost began, and it was "fully come" the next morning—on the first day of the week.

It appears to have been about nine o'clock on that memorable morning, that the Holy Ghost descended

³ Mark xiv, 12; *comp.* Lev. xxiii, 5.

⁴ Heb. תמימים, Sept. ὁλοκλήρους. ⁵ Lev. xxiii, 15, 16.

upon the gathered company of the disciples of Jesus.⁶ The gift of prophecy and tongues was then poured forth in abundance, and amidst the throng of strangers from many different parts of the world, every one heard, in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God. The apostle Peter more especially, being filled with the Holy Ghost, preached with so much effect to the assembled multitude, that about three thousand souls were added on that single day to the church of the Redeemer.⁷ Thus was the first day of the week again pointed out, by the divine finger, as the day of Christian worship, and was blessed and honoured by the LORD OF THE SABBATH. He who had risen from the dead and had appeared to his disciples on that day, and who, as it occurred from week to week, had assembled with their company, now completed the hallowing of the Christian sabbath, by the mission of the COMFORTER.

After the first day of the week had been so repeatedly distinguished by a display of divine power and goodness, it was natural that the disciples should regard it as a day peculiarly the LORD'S; and that, in the remembrance of his resurrection and ascension, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, they should, thenceforth, make a regular use of it for their solemn assemblies.

That the Christian churches, in apostolic times, were in the habit of meeting together at stated periods for the two purposes of worship and brotherly communion, there can be no doubt. In the first

⁶ Acts ii, 15.

⁷ Acts ii, 41.

epistle of Paul to the Corinthians we have a lively description, first, of their meetings for worship,⁸ and, secondly, of their *love feasts*,⁹ when they broke their bread and drank their wine in solemn commemoration of the death of Jesus. Now that these meetings took place on the *first day of the week*, we are furnished with incidental evidence in the same epistle. Paul commands collections to be made at Corinth, “upon the *first day of the week*,” for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and he expressly states that he had given the same directions to the churches of Galatia.¹ It is obvious that this particular day was fixed for these subscriptions, because the regular meetings of the church would afford the opportunity of their being easily gathered. Accordingly we find from Justin Martyr, that after the congregational worship of the early Christians on the Lord’s day, money was always collected for the benefit of the poor.²

⁸ See chap. xi, 1—20; xiv, 23—40.

⁹ Chap. xi, 20—34.

¹ 1 Cor. xvi, 1, 2. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, (παρ’ ἑαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅτι ἂν ἐλθῶμαι,) that there be no gathering when I come.” As there were to be no gatherings when the apostle came, it is plain that the collections were to be made previously, on the first days of the week. Every one who subscribed on these occasions, is represented by the apostle, as laying up in store a treasure for himself. So in 1 Tim. vi, 18, 19, those who are “ready to distribute, willing to communicate,” are described as “laying up in store for themselves (ἀποθησαυρίζοντας) a good foundation against the time to come.”

² *Apol.* i, cap. 67. Ed. Ben. p. 83.

Another evidence that the stated meetings of the Christians, during the time of the apostles, were held on this day, occurs in the history of Paul's travels. It appears that after he left Philippi, he crossed the sea and abode seven days at Troas. During the course of these seven days, we read of no meeting of the church: but on the last of them, which was the "*first day of the week*, the disciples came together to break bread." Nor was this the only object of their assembling. It appears that they also met for the purpose of worship and Christian instruction; for we read that "Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." The *religious meeting* held on this occasion, appears to have ended with the sudden accident which befell Eutyehus, one of the congregation. After this event, when Paul "was come up again and had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."³

These passages afford an evidence that the keeping of the Lord's day had then become a very general practice among the believers in Christ. The day was observed not merely at Jerusalem, where the resurrection of Jesus and the effusion of the Holy Spirit had taken place, but in distant countries or cities where the apostles had planted churches—for example, at Troas, in Galatia, at Corinth. And here we ought to mark the doctrine of the apostle Paul on the subject of the *Jewish sabbaths*.

When the apostle wrote, Jerusalem was still standing, and these sabbaths were still regularly observed.

³ Acts xx, 6—11.

Now Paul appears to have been convinced, at an earlier date than many of his brethren, that the shadows of the law were no longer binding. While, therefore, he dealt very tenderly with the Jewish believers, and forbade not their adherence to the practices of their forefathers, he plainly declared that Christians were free to pursue their own course, and that no man might judge them in relation to these ordinances. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days, (in the Greek '*the sabbaths*,'⁴) which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ."⁵ The word "sabbaths" has been understood by some commentators as here importing the Jewish *festivals in general*. But I conceive it points more especially to the days set apart, under the law, for rest and holy convocations, and more especially to the *seventh days of the week*. No Christian was any longer bound to observe these sabbaths, or to practise the ceremonies by which they were distinguished. All that appertained peculiarly to the Mosaic dispensation had now passed away; the shadow was exchanged for the substance; and the day on which Jesus rose from the dead had been hallowed by the Lord himself for his own worship, and for the rest and religious edification of his believing children.

This day was called among the primitive Christians as well as generally by the ancient fathers of the church, the *Lord's day*; partly because it was ap-

⁴ σαββάτων.

⁵ Col. ii, 16, 17.

pointed as a memorial of his resurrection, and partly because it was peculiarly dedicated to his service. It was towards the close of the apostolic age, and long after the destruction of Jerusalem, that the apostle John thus designated the Christian sabbath. When banished in his old age to the Isle of Patmos, and there separated from communion with his brethren, he appears to have been careful even in his solitude, to keep that day holy; for he informs us that he was “*in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,*” when he heard behind him the voice of Christ, and received the messages which he was afterwards to deliver to the churches.⁶ Doubtless, it was to the apostle a time of deep retirement of mind; and wonderful indeed were the visions to which on that hallowed occasion his eye of faith was opened. The Lord of the sabbath was again honouring the day which he had chosen for himself. [*See Appendix A.*]

Having stated the whole of the evidence afforded by the New Testament, respecting the rise and establishment of the Christian sabbath, I must now proceed to the consideration of uninspired records.

Among these must be reckoned the Catholic Epistle of *Barnabas*, although there is strong evidence of its genuineness, and its author lived during the apostolic age. Barnabas speculates on the coming of the Millennium after seven thousand years (from the creation) of labour and sorrow. “Wherefore,” he adds, “we keep the *eighth day* (i. e. the first day of the

⁶ Rev. i, 10.

week) as a joyful holy day, on which day also Jesus rose from the dead.”⁷

Ignatius (A.D. 101) in his epistle to the Magnesians, contrasts the Jewish practice of *sabbatizing* with “*living according to the Lord’s day on which our Life arose.*”⁸ These expressions are probably descriptive of a *life* spent in holiness and virtue after the likeness of the resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless, they contain a clear allusion to the keeping of the *Lord’s day*, as distinguished from the observance of the Jewish sabbath. Precisely similar allusions are made by Clement of Alexandria, (A.D. 192,⁹) and Origen, (A.D. 230.¹)

Our next witness is Pliny the younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia (A.D. 107.) In his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan respecting the Christian martyrs, he states that certain persons who had been induced by the extremity of their sufferings to renounce their faith in Jesus, gave the following account of their former religion:—“That they were accustomed on a *stated day* to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by a sacred obligation not to commit any wickedness; but on the contrary, to abstain from thefts, robberies, and adultries; also not to violate their promise, or deny a pledge; after

⁷ Διὸ καὶ ἄγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἡγδόην, εἰς εὐφροσύνην ἐν ᾗ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν. *Epist. Cath.* Ed. Cotelerii, p. 47.

⁸ μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες ἐν ᾗ καὶ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν. *Cap.* 9.

⁹ Strom. lib. vii, cap. 12, Ed. Sylb. p. 744.

¹ *Contra Celsum*, lib. viii, cap. 22.

which it was their custom to separate and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless meal.”² Here evidently were the meetings for worship, and the commemorative supper, very much as they were practised by the Corinthian Christians in the days of Paul. But what was the *stated day*, when these things took place?

Clearly the *first day of the week*, as is proved by the very question which it was customary for the Roman persecutors to address to the martyrs—*Domini-cum servasti?*—*Hast thou kept the Lord's day?*—to which the answer usually returned was in substance as follows: *Christianus sum, intermittere non possum*—“*I am a Christian, I cannot omit it.*”³

An unquestionable evidence on this point is afforded us by Justin Martyr, who, in his apology addressed to the Emperor Antoninus, (A.D. 147,) gives a lively account of the Christian day of worship. “On the day called *Sunday*,” he says, “there is a meeting in one place of all the Christians who live either in the towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles (supposed to mean the *four gospels*,) or the writings of the prophets, are read to them as long as is suitable. When the reader stops, the president pronounces an admonition, and exhorts to the imita-

² “Quod essent soliti *stato die* ante lucem convenire : carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem : seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent ; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium.” Lib. x, Ep. 97.

³ *Acts of Martyrs, in Bishop Andrews on the Ten commandments*, p. 264.

tion of these noble examples; after which we all arise and begin to pray.”⁴ Justin then describes the eucharistical meal, and the collections made for the poor, and concludes by explaining *why* this day of the week was chosen for their public worship. “We all meet together on the Sunday, because it is the *first day*—on which God turned the darkness (into light,) gave shape to the chaos, and made the world; and on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead.”⁵

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, (A.D. 170,) when writing to the Romans, informs them that the epistle of Clement their late Bishop, had been read in the church at Corinth, *while they were keeping the Lord's holy day*⁶—an incidental allusion which proves that

⁴ *Apol.* i, cap. 67, Ed. Ben. p. 83. Τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρα πάντων κατὰ τόλεις ἢ ἀγροῦς μενόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεῦματα τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκειται, μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ· εἶτα παυσαμένου τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος, ὁ προεστὼς διὰ λόγου τὴν νοῦθεσίαν καὶ πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιῶνται· ἔπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες, καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν. The reader will observe from this passage that the early Christians, in their public assemblies, prayed *standing*. It appears from Irenæus and Tertullian, that they had an objection to genuflexion on the Lord's day, because the upright position alone reminded them of his rising from the grave. *Resp. ad Quæst.* 115 *ad Orthodoxos*, Ed. Ben. p. 342. *Tertull. de Coron. Mil.* cap. 3.

⁵ Τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν κοινῇ πάντες τῆν συνέλευσιν ποιούμεθα ἐπειδὴ πρώτη ἐστὶν ἡμέρα, ἐν ᾗ ὁ Θεὸς τὸ σκότος καὶ τὴν ὕλην τρέψας, κόσμον ἐποίησε· καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος σωτὴρ τῆ αὐτῆς ἡμέρας ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη.

⁶ τὴν σήμερον οὖν κυριακὴν ἁγίαν ἡμέραν διηγάζομεν ἐν ᾗ ἀνεγνώκαμεν ὑμῶν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν. *Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* lib. iv, cap. 23.

Clement was one of Paul's companions. His first epistle to the Corinthians is considered to be a genuine production, and is particularly valuable, from the manner in which it authenticates the epistles of Paul; especially those to the Corinthians and to the Hebrews.

the practice of observing that day was familiar both to the writer, and to those persons whom he was addressing.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, and with it of the whole Jewish polity, and during the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, it is probable that the *Lord's day* was universally recognized as the only Christian sabbath. Ignatius, as we have already remarked, contrasts this day with the old sabbath of the Jews; and while abundant evidence is afforded by the other authors whom we have now cited, that the first day of the week was kept as a solemn day of worship, no mention is made by any of them of the seventh day, as claiming any peculiar honours from Christians. Accordingly Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, (A.D. 167,) expressly asserts that the Lord's day was their *sabbath*. "On the Lord's day *every one of us Christians keeps the sabbath*, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God."⁷ So also Tertullian, (A.D. 192,) while he makes frequent mention of the keeping of the Lord's day, speaks of the Jewish sabbaths as *foreign* to believers in Jesus.⁸ Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, (A.D. 250,) takes no notice of the old sabbath, but repeatedly alludes to the Lord's day, as that which was kept holy among Christians.⁹ [*See Appendix B.*]

⁷ Quoted by Dwight, *Theology*, vol. iv, p. 26.

⁸ "Nobis quibus sabbata *extranea* sunt, et neomeniæ et feriæ a Deo aliquando dilectæ O melior fides nationum in suam sectam, quæ nullam solemnitatem Christianorum sibi vindicat, non *Dominicum diem*, non Pentecostem," &c. *De Idol.* cap. 14, Ed. Semler. tom. iv, 167.

⁹ *De Opere et Eleemos.* Ed. Oxon. p. 203, Ep. 38, 63.

The witnesses whose testimony we have now adduced, were scattered over various countries. Barnabas, Justin, and Origen, lived in *Palestine*; Clement of Alexandria in *Egypt*; Pliny (during his proconsulship) in *Bithynia*; Ignatius in *Syria*; Dionysius in *Greece*; the persons to whom he wrote in *Italy*; Irenæus in *Gaul*; Tertullian and Cyprian in *Libya*. We may conclude, therefore, that the practice of devoting the first day of the week to religious purposes, became, during the first three centuries after the Christian era, *universal in the church of Christ*. So remarkable and extensive an uniformity could not have arisen from accident. It must surely have been founded on some common principle, generally understood. Now I conceive that the principle in question could have been no other than the unalterable obligation of the fourth commandment—connected with an understanding (derived from the apostles themselves) that Christians were to keep *that* day of the week as their sabbath on which Jesus had risen from the dead.

In the fourth century, Constantine, (A.D. 316,) the first of the Roman emperors who embraced Christianity, enjoined the religious observance of the Lord's day on all his own household, and commanded that it should be kept as a day of rest throughout the Roman empire.¹ He decreed, moreover, that the Christian soldiers in his armies, should be allowed the opportunity of performing their religious duties on that day, without molestation.

¹ διὰ τοῖς ὑπὸ τὴν Ρωμαίων ἀρχὴν πολιτευομένοις ἅπασιν σχολὴν ἄγειν ταῖς ἑπανάμοις τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμέραις ἐνουδέτει.

Euseb. in *Vitá Const.* lib. iv, cap. 18.

It is somewhat remarkable, that Constantine also commanded the Jewish sabbath to be “honoured”²—a circumstance which, among many others, proves that at this period, a retrograde movement had taken place in the church, towards the obsolete rites of Judaism. In the Apostolic Constitutions, a spurious work, supposed to have been the production of this century, frequent reference is made to the Mosaic sabbath, as well as to the Lord’s day; and *both* are commanded to be kept as solemn festivals, and as days of public worship.³ Hence it became necessary for those persons who perceived the inconsistency of such a combination, to assert the superior claims of the Christian sabbath. Accordingly we find the celebrated Athanasius (A.D. 326) renouncing the authority of the old sabbath, and asserting that the Lord himself *had exchanged it for the Lord’s day*.⁴ One of the canons of the council of Laodicea (A.D. about 350) is also very express on this subject. “Christians must not Judaize, or cease from work on the sabbath, (i. e. on the seventh day of the week,) but must work on that same day (it being allowed that part of it should be occupied in public worship.) *Rather must they prefer in honour the Lord’s day, and, if it be in their power, must rest in it as Christians.* But if they be found Judaists, let them be accursed from Christ.”⁵

² ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς τοῦ Σαββάτου τιμᾶν. *Ibid.*

³ Vid. lib. vii, cap. 23, &c.

⁴ μετέδθηκε δὲ ὁ Κύριος τὴν σαββάτου ἡμέραν εἰς κυριακὴν. *De Semente*, Ed. Colon. tom. i, p. 1060.

⁵ Canon. xxix. Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ Χριστιανούς Ἰουδαίζειν, καὶ ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ σχολάζειν, ἀλλὰ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ τὴν δὲ κυριακὴν προ-

The reserve here made—"if it be in their power"—must be understood as an allowance for works of necessity. It appears that Constantine regarded agricultural labour to be of this description;⁶ but a higher standard in relation to this point, was afterwards established, as will appear from the following declaration issued by Leo, the bishop of Rome, (A.D. 440,) on behalf of the Christian church in his day:—"We ordain, according to the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles thereby directed, that on the sacred day, wherein our own integrity was restored, all do rest and cease from labour; that neither husbandmen nor other persons on that day, put their hands to forbidden works. For if the Jews did so much reverence their sabbath, which was but a shadow of ours, are not we, which inhabit the light and truth of grace, bound to honour that day which the Lord himself hath honoured, and hath herein delivered us both from dishonour and from death? Are we not bound to keep it singular and inviolable, well contenting ourselves with so liberal a grant of the remainder, and not encroaching upon that one day, which God hath chosen to his own honour? Were it not reckless neglect of religion, to make that very day common, and to think we may do with it as with the rest?"⁷

To these testimonies it would be easy to add a multitude of others; for the keeping of the Lord's day

πιμῶντες, εἶγε δυνάιντο, σχολάζειν ὡς Χριστιανοί. Εἰ δὲ εὐρεθεῖεν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἔστωσαν ἀνάδεμα παρὰ Χριστοῦ. *Mansi Coll. Concill.* tom. ii, p. 570.

⁶ *Cod. lib.* iii, tit. 12, 1, 3. *Hooker's Ecc. Pol.* book v, vol. ii, 379.

⁷ *Constit.* liv. *Hooker, ibid.*

as a time of rest and worship is interwoven with the history of the church of Christ from its earliest origin to the present time; but having traced the practice which prevailed in this respect during five centuries, we may now content ourselves with an appeal to modern Christianity. The custom of keeping the first day of the week as a day of rest and worship—a custom which lived even through the darkest ages of the church, was confirmed by a general though tacit consent, at the period of the Reformation. Since that time, believers in Jesus of every name, Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, have maintained this practice, as a leading feature in their Christian profession. All, on some ground or other, have considered it to be their duty to allot one day in seven to religious services; and all have agreed in observing the first day of the week, as the most appropriate for this sacred purpose. Nor shall we be deemed presumptuous in asserting, that He who on the day of Pentecost poured forth his Holy Spirit on the infant church, has condescended, in every succeeding age, to bless the assemblies of his people with a measure of the same influence.

When we call to mind, that a right use of the Christian sabbath has been the means appointed in the order of providence, for the conversion and sanctification (as we may fully believe) of a vast multitude of immortal souls, we shall be little disposed to dispute the authority of the institution, or to doubt that the steadfast maintenance of it is consistent with the *will of God*.

It appears then—First, with respect to the *Jewish*

sabbath, that although virtually abolished, as far as regards its peculiar features, by the death of Christ, it continued for many years after that event to be observed by the Jews who believed in Jesus, and even by some of their Gentile brethren;—that the apostle Paul plainly laid down the principle, that *Christians* were at liberty to disuse it;—that after the destruction of Jerusalem, and during the first three centuries of the history of the church, it fell into disuse among the generality of Christians;—that although, under the renewed influence of Judaism, it revived for a time in the fourth century, the observance of it was quickly condemned, and has long since utterly disappeared in the church of Christ.

Secondly, with respect to the *Christian sabbath*, that it arose on the very day of our Lord's resurrection;—that it was supported from week to week by the sanction of his presence, in the assemblies of his people;—that it was hallowed, probably, by the glories of his ascension, and certainly by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost;—that during the lives of the apostles, it was the day on which the churches of Christ met for the purposes of worship and communion;—that John called it “the Lord's day,” and was “in the Spirit” on it, in the Isle of Patmos;—that, in the succeeding age, it was alluded to as a day of religious solemnity by Pliny the younger, and clearly described as such by Justin, Dionysius, Irenæus, Tertullian, and other ancient fathers;—that, under the Emperor Constantine, it was observed as a sacred day of rest throughout the Roman Empire;—that, in the fifth century, it was yet more distinctly

recognised in its sabbatical character;—that it has since been maintained in every age of the church, and is still universally acknowledged by Christians;—and finally, that the blessing which has rested on the use of it, affords, in addition to every other proof, a substantial evidence of its divine authority.

In conclusion let it be remarked, that while the sabbath of the Jew and that of the Christian serve the same purpose as a memorial of *creation*, it is the latter only which records the *blessings of redemption*. The Jew indeed is reminded by his sabbath of the deliverance of his forefathers from Egypt: but we are taught by *ours* to meditate on a holier freedom, and to recollect an infinitely greater salvation—a freedom from the tyranny of sin and Satan; a salvation from the “bitter pains of eternal death.” While we call to mind the glorious events which marked the origin, and have distinguished the course of this institution, we can never cease to regard it as sacred to God—to the FATHER who *creates*; to the SON who *redeems*; and to the HOLY GHOST who *anoints and sanctifies*. The more justly therefore we appreciate our “access” through the Son, “in one Spirit unto the Father,” the higher will be our value, and the warmer our affection, for the CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

CONCLUSION.

SOME persons who entertain a high view of the spirituality of the gospel, regard the sabbath as an outward rite, in its nature figurative; and although they deem it expedient, and their duty because expedient, to assemble *on that day* for the purpose of public worship, a notion is nevertheless predominant with them that the institution itself, like every other shadow, is of no authority under the Christian dispensation. To the candid consideration of such persons, I venture to present the evidences contained in the preceding chapters. These, I trust, are sufficient to show that the setting apart of one day in seven, for the purposes of rest and worship, is a *divine ordinance*, which was bestowed on our first parents; that this ordinance was observed by the patriarchs—was delivered to the Israelites as an essential part of their moral code—was exalted far above their whole ceremonial system—was maintained, in its true integrity, by the Saviour of men—and, finally, having been adapted to the peculiar character of the gospel, has flourished in the Christian church, from its earliest origin to the present day.

With regard to the figurative nature of the sabbath, it may indeed be allowed that *one* of its purposes is to typify our heavenly rest: and like other types, it will cease to every one of us, when its antitype comes. Till then, in the very nature of things, its use and authority continue. In one point of view, indeed, the *perpetual sabbath* of the Christian may be said to be already begun; for his whole life ought to be devoted to the glory of his Creator; and *whatsoever* he does, should be done in the name of Jesus. Every day, every hour he lives, is the Lord's. But in our present imperfect condition, it would surely be a dangerous error so to apply this doctrine, as to disregard the *especial* claims of the Christian sabbath. Any man who should do so, would too probably be found, within a short period of time, *wholly for the world*, instead of *wholly for God*.

It is, indeed, a powerful argument for the divine authority of this institution, that as, on the one hand, a conspicuous blessing rests on the use of it, so on the other, the neglect or perversion of it never fails to be followed by vice, misery, and confusion. Ungodliness is the worst of all foes to moral virtue and civil order—to the decency, harmony, and happiness, of society; and ungodliness and sabbath-breaking act and react. The former naturally leads to the latter, and the latter confirms and aggravates the former.

That this effect is produced even on minds devoted to intellectual objects, is unquestionably true, but it becomes more notorious among those classes of men whose education is limited, and whose habits are but little refined. Every one who is accustomed to com-

municate, in our jails and other such places, with the refuse of society—with the most abandoned and profligate of men—must be aware that *sabbath-breaking* is, very commonly, a first step to every species of crime. Nor was the curse which rests on the neglect and abuse of the sabbath much less conspicuous, when an attempt was made to remodel the law and to alter its proportions. The sages of the French Revolution, as the reader is probably well aware, substituted one day of rest in *ten*, for one in *seven*. And what was the consequence? So great a degree of disorder and wretchedness, that the people were driven by mere necessity, speedily to take refuge again in their ancient practice.

These remarks naturally lead us to some further inquiry into the duties of the sabbath, and into the proper method of keeping the day “holy.”

The first great principle which ought always to be kept in view, in relation to this subject, is that every seventh day (after six days of work) is “the sabbath of the LORD OUR GOD;” and is, therefore, in a peculiar manner and degree, to be devoted to his service. It is true that we serve God indirectly, while we are rightly pursuing our temporal avocations; for they are a part of the duty of life. But on the sabbath-day, the service of our Creator must be at once direct and uninterrupted.

In order to this end it is of great importance that we should habituate ourselves, whenever the sabbath recurs, and even on its near approach, to break the trains of worldly thought, and to divest the *mind* of the cares and interests of business. “*Vacare Deo*”—

to be empty for God—must then be our constant motto. Young people would find their religious welfare, and even their worldly happiness, greatly promoted by the formation of such a habit. Let no man, however, suppose that he will succeed in this object, unless he cordially embraces and deeply feels the great truths of religion. We must be much with Christ every day of our lives, in order to be fitted to commune with him uninterruptedly, on the sabbath-day. Nothing but the love of God will ever drive the love of the world out of our hearts. But when we have come (as an able writer expresses it) under “the expulsive power” of this “new affection,” we shall find it comparatively easy, as it will ever be delightful, to lay aside our temporal cares on the arrival of the day of rest, and to present to the influence of holy things the length and breadth of an undivided mind. Nor shall we fail to be rewarded for such a practice even in our temporal concerns; for to these we shall afterwards return with our feelings rectified and our understanding cleared—with far greater ability for effectually and *rightly* conducting them, than we should otherwise have possessed.

The mind being thus given up, on the sabbath, to the service of God and to the pursuit of our heavenly inheritance, will above all things be led into *communion* with the Creator. Prayer on our own account and intercession on account of others, which to the Christian form a part of every day’s duty, will often on the sabbath be more extended than usual, and will sometimes be found to arise from the heart with that increase of holy fervour—that renewal of faith and

love—which a day devoted to religious purposes is calculated to produce. Nor will the pious Christian, on the day of rest, forget to review the past week, and to enter upon that deliberate and candid examination of himself, which will be sure to lead both to humiliation and devotion. On these occasions of solemn retrospect, a sense will sometimes be bestowed on him, both of his own vileness and of the holiness of God; and the secret language of his heart will be like that of Job,—“I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”¹

The private perusal of Scripture, like private prayer, must be regarded as an important *daily* duty. Yet when we reflect on the temporal cares with which some persons are surrounded, and especially on the hourly occupation of the labouring classes, we may well rejoice in the weekly recurrence of a day, on which even the most busy persons may read the Bible deliberately—may compare its corresponding parts, mark its harmony, and drink deeply of its spirit. To a considerable proportion of the community, the Scriptures would be comparatively of little use, were it not for the sabbath; and on the other hand, the sabbath would be far less profitable, if we did not possess the Bible. These precious gifts of God, in combining to promote the welfare of mankind, materially enhance the value of each other.

But the most important duty of the sabbath is of a public nature. On this hallowed day, we are bound

¹ Job xlii, 5, 6.

by a sacred obligation, to manifest our allegiance to the King of kings, by publicly assembling in order to worship him. It is through this means especially, that the sabbath becomes a sign between us and our God, by which we are marked as his children—by which it is clearly shewn to the world around us, that *He* is the God who *sanctifies* us, and whom we esteem it our highest privilege to serve and adore.² In the punctual performance of this duty we may be encouraged, by calling to mind the holy convocations of ancient Israel—the synagogue worship of a later date, regularly maintained even by a degenerate people—the mercies of the day of Pentecost—the uniform practice of the primitive Christians—and above all, the example of our Saviour himself. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.”³

On a subject so familiar to the mind of every Christian as that of public worship, many remarks cannot be necessary. It may not however be useless to observe, 1. That this is a duty which demands of us *zeal* and *diligence*. It is a miserable symptom of a luke-warm spirit, when trifling difficulties detain us from our places of worship, or prevent our attending them, where the opportunity is afforded, *twice in the day*. We must endeavour to press through these obstructions in some small measure of that faith, which

² Exod. xxxi, 13.

³ Heb. x, 24, 25.

as our Saviour declared, is sufficient to remove mountains; ⁴ and above all, we must pray that our *chief* difficulty—the natural aversion of the heart to all things holy and heavenly—may be thoroughly overcome by the *love of God*. Nor ought we to forget that *diligence*, which is necessary in order to our constant attendance of public worship, is equally so for its right performance. On these occasions, the devotional feelings should have their full sway, and the mind be directed, with all its energies, to the performance of our highest duty. The *whole man* ought then to be presented “a living sacrifice” unto God.

2. *Sincerity and spirituality* are qualities of mind, absolutely essential to our public as well as private devotions. Let us ever remember that “God is not mocked;” and that it is utterly in vain for us to draw nigh to him with our lips, or to use any other outward form of worship, while our hearts are far from him. Under the dispensation of the gospel, the heart is the only altar from which can arise with acceptance, the incense of adoration. The hour “*now is*” when the “true worshippers” must “worship the Father in spirit and in truth;” and it is an animating reflection, that “the Father *seeketh* such to worship him.” ⁵ By the gentle influence of his Spirit, he invites and allures his children to draw near to him; and when they are dismayed in the view of their own vileness, and of his perfect holiness, he cheers them with the remembrance, that an access is opened for them, through “the blood of the covenant,”—that it is their duty

⁴ Matt. xvii, 20.

⁵ John iv, 23.

as well as their privilege, freely to plead the name of that Saviour, who “is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”⁶

3. Among the ancient Hebrews the sabbath was a joyful festival; and it was one of the precepts of the early fathers of the church that no man should *fast* on the “Lord’s day.”⁷ The reflecting Christian will indeed observe on that day more than usual moderation in his meals, that he may not occasion labour to others; but the sabbath, and especially its ordinances of public worship, will be to him a *spiritual feast*, and will often remind him of that ancient promise—“In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”⁸ In frequenting the solemn assemblies of the Lord’s people, we ought to cultivate a joyful and thankful spirit; to train our minds to a vivid perception of the *beauty* of holiness;” and to *delight ourselves* in the worship of God. Let us ever remember that on these occasions we meet for the purpose of commemorating the glories of *creation*, the wisdom and goodness of *providence*, and the wonders of *redeeming love*. Let us *rejoice* in the presence of that Saviour who is risen from the dead—is enthroned in glory at the right-hand of the Father—is “touched with a feeling of our infirmities;”—and “ever liveth to make intercession” for his people.

⁶ John xiv, 6.

⁷ “Die dominico jejunium nefas ducimus.” *Tertull. de Corona Mil.* cap. 3.

⁸ Isa. xxv, 6.

4. Immediately connected with the duty of public worship, is the blessing of Christian communion. Ours is not the religion of hermits. It is distinguished by a social character. It is enlivened by the influence of that pure love which cements together all the members of the body of Christ, (whatsoever their name or mode of worship,) under one Holy Head. Next to the grace of God, there is nothing by which we are so much assisted in our Christian course, as by the "unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." Now during the course of their daily temporal engagements, Christians are of necessity much separated from each other; and are left to pursue, as God enables them, their individual course of duty. But the sabbath-day calls them together in companies, "with one accord in one place." And then for a time all outward distinctions amongst them are profitably forgotten. Male and female, parent and child, master and servant, meet before God on common principles. They are animated by the same hope; they are striving after the same inheritance; they bow down as unworthy sinners before the same God; they confide for acceptance in the same precious blood; and thus are they brought to feel that they are ONE in Christ Jesus.

It must, I think, be evident to every one who is acquainted with the course of this world, that were it not for the constant recurrence of the sabbath-day, our public worship would be curtailed and frustrated, and our religious communion lamentably marred. In such a case there is too much reason to believe that the church of Christ would soon lose her distinctive

marks of devotion and charity, and the strength of her children be scattered and die away.⁹

To the ministers of the gospel, under every name, if they rightly perform their duty, the first day of the week seldom fails to be one of considerable exertion. Like the priests in the temple of Jerusalem who defiled the sabbath and were blameless, they are fully justified in pursuing the *labour* of their calling, by the holiness of the object to which it is directed. Nor dare they do otherwise; for every man who is truly called into this sacred service can say with the apostle Paul "WOE IS UNTO ME if I preach not the gospel."¹ It ought, however, to be observed that the sabbath-day has a tendency, in a subordinate point of view, to convert every Christian into a minister of the gospel; for it becomes us all, if opportunity be afforded, to devote some portion of its hours to the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ. The instruction of children in the Holy Scriptures is a duty in which great numbers even of young persons are now engaged on the sabbath-day; and who can doubt that these labours of love are abundantly blessed to themselves, as well as to the objects of their care?

⁹ It is a most desirable practice adopted by many religious societies, to meet for the purpose of public worship at least once in the course of the week, as well as on the sabbath. Although these assemblies are the means of much edification, they are seldom found to serve the purpose of congregational worship and communion, in their *full* extent. I believe that the persons who are the most diligent in performing this Christian duty, are precisely those who have the highest value for the *sabbath-day*.

¹ 1 Cor. ix, 16.

Another duty of the same character devolves peculiarly on heads of families. It is that of collecting their household together for the purpose of reading the Bible to them, and (as far as ability is given) of unfolding to their understanding, and impressing on their hearts, its sacred contents. The social acts of religion and worship ought indeed to find their place in the daily order of every Christian family. But on the evening of the sabbath, a longer time than usual may often be devoted to this object; nor ought we to hesitate on such occasions to look beyond the limits of our own families, and to seek the company of our poor neighbours. The influence which during the course of the week we are accustomed to exercise over others for temporal purposes, ought on the sabbath-day to *change its direction*, and be applied with an honest diligence to their spiritual good. If this rule were universally observed, how extensive would be its effect on the character and condition of society!

Having thus considered those duties of the sabbath, which are properly ranged under the head of *worship*, I shall proceed to make a few remarks on another branch of our subject. Those who believe that the fourth commandment is obligatory on every Christian, are bound to acknowledge, that *rest* as well as devotion is required of us on the sabbath-day. “*In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.*” Now, although the literal strictness of this precept is materially softened by the influence of the

gospel, it must be obvious to every serious observer, that its true meaning and spirit are far too much disregarded in the present day. It is the destiny of man that he should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the sabbath is graciously bestowed upon him as a relief to that destiny. His mental energy and his bodily strength are to be renewed by its leisure; and God, who has thus bestowed upon man the substantial blessing of a periodical cessation from toil, has decreed the same privilege even to inferior animals. While, therefore, we make an allowance for temporal exigencies, and a still wider one for the calls of devotion and charity, we ought, on the sabbath-day, to exercise great caution not to thwart the benevolent purposes of our Creator, by unnecessarily breaking the rest either of our servants, or of our cattle. The *domestic*, on that day, should find his business materially lessened; the *labourer* should enjoy, as far as possible, an uninterrupted rest; and the beast, which has served us faithfully during the week, should not be deprived of his share of the general repose.

Were the law of a gracious Creator in reference to this point more carefully observed, the servants in many families would be spared that labour on the sabbath, which now too often prevents their attending to any religious duty. Nor would our country be any longer disgraced by the very prevalent practice of both private and public travelling, on the day appointed, in the order of Providence, for public worship and for the needful intermission of work. Many a driver and ostler, who now knows no cessation from

his hourly activity, would then be found frequenting his place of worship; and many a poor animal which now pants under the lash on the sabbath, would then be permitted to recover strength for the ensuing six days of inevitable labour. To extend our views to a greater distance,—what a shameful rebellion against the law of God, is the denial of a *sabbath* to our colonial slaves; and how deep the guilt of that nation which permits the continuance of so impious a cruelty!

The appointment of every seventh day for repose from labour, is calculated to remind us of the *mild* and *benevolent* nature of the sabbatical law. There is indeed no harshness in its genuine meaning; and while every thing, on that day, ought to be avoided which has any tendency to produce a forgetfulness of its duties, it is nevertheless true that one of its objects is *lawful refreshment*. While we refrain from doing our own pleasure, and turn away our foot from every dissipating amusement, on God's holy day,² we may rest satisfied that the hour of relaxation, the retired walk, and the calm contemplation of the beauties of nature, are in just accordance with its character and purpose. So long as they interfere with no duty of worship or charity, and are enjoyed in the *remembrance of God*, they are in themselves desirable, and consist with the true spirit of the law. [See *Appendix C.*]

It is of especial importance that a cheerful view of the sabbath should be impressed on the minds of children; and that while the common course both of their studies and their amusements is suspended, they

² Isa. lviii, 13.

should be taught to regard it as a day of peculiar *happi-ness*. We must lead them onwards in their Christian course, with a gentle and alluring hand, and avail ourselves of every recurring sabbath, for imbuing them with a sense of the *pleasures* of religion.

Finally, it will not be irrelevant to remind the fervent and devoted Christian, that the Lord of the sabbath has not appointed it as a period of *arduous toil*, even in the pursuit of religion; but rather as a day of joyful commemoration, and of happy reviving communion with HIMSELF. Tranquillity and moderation in the works of charity are desirable on the sabbath, as well as diligence; and whether we are engaged in delivering the message of the gospel to others, or in receiving those glad tidings, we can then wear no better ornament than that of a meek and quiet spirit. While, therefore, we pursue all the duties of the day with zeal and fidelity, let us not forget to enjoy the privilege of *mental repose*. Let us cultivate a *contemplative mind*; and let us pray to be made partakers of the "*peace of God which passeth all understanding*."³ [See appendix D.]

Having thus endeavoured to trace the private, the social, and the public duties of the sabbath, and having considered the institution in its double character of a day of worship and a day of rest, we may now conclude this little volume by remarking, that in *both* these respects the sabbath is a type of heaven. The apostle is evidently speaking of our final inheritance, when, after alluding to the rest of God after the cre-

³ Phil. iv, 7.

ation, and to that of the Israelites in the promised land, he adds, "There remaineth therefore a *rest* (or, as in the Greek, *the keeping of a sabbath-day*⁴) to the people of God."

The sabbath is the significant means appointed in the wisdom of Providence, not only for reminding us of the past mercies of our God, but for keeping alive our expectation of future and never-ending bliss. The more watchful and diligent we are in making a right use of this divine institution, the better shall we be prepared for its fulfilment in the world to come. There shall those who live and die in JESUS unite with the whole church triumphant in pure and perpetual WORSHIP. There shall they cease from their sorrow, their conflict, and their labour; and enjoy in the presence of their God and Saviour, A GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL REST.

⁴ σαββατισμὸς, Heb. iv, 9.

A P P E N D I X.

For the following Appendix I am indebted to Moses Stuart, the well known American Biblical Critic, who published an edition of my little work, A.D. 1833.

A P P E N D I X A.

THE subject thus introduced by Mr. Gurney, deserves a still more attentive consideration, on account of the many objections raised against the strict observance of the sabbath, by an erroneous interpretation of the passage which he has cited from the epistle to the Colossians, and of another one in Rom. xiv, 5. The latter runs thus: "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." On this I remark,

(1) That the apostle, as appears from the context, is evidently contending against those who were imbued with *Jewish* superstitions, and with zeal for the continued observance of the Mosaic law. In the epistle to the Romans, this is perfectly clear; inasmuch as the context is occupied with the dispute respecting the use of meats, &c. In the epistle to the Colossians it is equally clear; inasmuch as the things enumerated in the very verse in question, are things which pertain to the ritual of the Mosaic law. The nature of the *days* mentioned, then, is to be judged of in a manner that is accordant with the fact just stated.

(2) In the apostolic age, there prevailed a distinction between the name of the *first* day of the week and of the *seventh*; the former was called LORD'S DAY (*ἡμέρα κυριακή*;) the latter, SABBATH (*σάββατον*.) So we have it in Rev. i, 10, "I was in the Spirit on the *Lord's day*." So Ignatius (*Epist. ad Magnes.* about A.D. 101) calls the *first* day of the week, the *Lord's day* (*τὴν κυριακὴν*,) the *day consecrated to the resurrection, the queen and prince of all days*. And again, in the same epistle: "Let every friend of Christ

celebrate the *Lord's day* (τὴν κυριακήν.) That all the later Christian Fathers made the distinction just mentioned, need not be proved to any one acquainted in any tolerable degree with the ancient writers of the Christian church. "It was called the Lord's day, because the Lord arose from the dead on this day," says Chrysostom, (and very truly,) in his commentary on Psalm cxix. It was not until the party in the Christian church had become extinct, or nearly so, who pleaded for the observance of the seventh day of Jewish sabbath, as well as of the Lord's day, that the name *sabbath* began to be given to the *first* day of the week.

(3) In the ancient church, even from the first, there was a party who kept the *seventh* day of the week, (i. e. the Jewish sabbath,) as well as the *first*. Nothing could be more natural than for the *Judaizing* Christians to insist upon this; for as they were unwilling to remit even any of the less important prescriptions of the ritual law, how much more would they hold to the sacredness of the Jewish sabbath? Theodoret (*Hæret. Fab.* ii, i,) speaking of the Ebionites, i. e. a party of the *Judaizing* Christians, says, "They keep the *sabbath* according to the Jewish law, and sanctify the LORD'S DAY in like manner as we do." This gives a good historical view of the state of things, in the early ages of the church. More or less of *seventh day* observance was practised, at length, in nearly all the Greek and Latin churches; in the former this day was kept as a *festival*, in the latter as a *fast*. As superstition increased, matters came at length to such a pass, that the council of Laodicea (about A.D. 350) were obliged to make a decree, that Christians should not refrain from labour on the seventh day or the sabbath. Their words are, "It is not proper for Christians to Judaize, and to cease from labour on the sabbath [seventh day;] but they ought to work on this day; and to put especial honour (προσημῶντες) upon the *Lord's day*, by refraining from labour as Christians. If any one be found Judaizing, let him be anathematized," &c. Can. xxix. See *Bingham's Ecc. Antiq.* v, p. 286.

(4) With such facts in view, nothing is easier than to explain the passages above quoted from the epistles of Paul. The zealots for the law wished the *Jewish sabbath* to be observed, as well as the *Lord's day*; for about the latter there appears never to have been any question among any class of the early Christians, so far as I have been able to discover. Even the Ebionites, as we have seen, kept the *Lord's day*. But Paul did not believe that Christians were *bound* to observe the Jewish sabbath. Still, he did not

wish those to be opposed and contradicted, who were zealous for this usage. "Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind," said he, i. e. "Let each one act, in this respect, as his own conscience shall judge best. I do not forbid him to keep the seventh day; nor can I enjoin upon him to keep it."

That the early Christians never understood Paul as renouncing the observance of the Christian sabbath, is sufficiently manifest from the fact, that one and all of them held the first day of the week to be sacred. As *Lord's day* was the universal appellation of this, in the early ages, so there was no danger of their misapprehending Paul, (as many in modern times have done,) when he spoke of the *sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come*. Indeed this last expression shews that *Jewish sabbaths* must have been meant; for the *things to come* are those things which belong to the gospel dispensation, i. e. the things yet future, while the observance of the ritual law was in full force: see Heb. x, 1.

These considerations make it plain, how much the two texts in question have been misinterpreted, when they have been explained as meaning, that under the Christian dispensation the sabbath is a matter of indifference, which is wholly left to the private judgment of each individual. That such was the case in regard to the *Jewish or seventh-day sabbath*, is indeed very clear. Moreover, because Paul did not expressly decide *against* the keeping of this, the practice of it was continued by Christians, who were jealous for the honour of the Mosaic law, and finally became, as we have seen, predominant throughout Christendom. It was supposed, at length, that the fourth commandment did require the observance of the *seventh-day sabbath* (not merely a seventh part of time;) and, reasoning as Christians of the present day are wont to do, viz. that *all* which belonged to the ten commandments was immutable and perpetual, the churches in general came gradually to regard the seventh-day sabbath as altogether sacred. But amidst all this mistaken reasoning and usage, (which as we have seen) the Council of Laodicea felt themselves bound to correct, I find no traces of a doubt raised, whether the *Lord's day*, i. e. the first day of the week, was to be kept sacred. The testimony of Pliny in A. D. 107, that "Christians [as those whom he examined, declared] were accustomed to meet together *stato die, on a STATED day*;" the testimony of Ignatius (A. D. 101,) above cited, viz. that the first day of the week was "the *Lord's day, resurrection-day* (*ἀναστάσιμον*,) the queen and prince of all days;" and also his exhortation, "Let

every friend of Christ *celebrate the Lord's day*," (ἑορταζέτω πᾶς φιλόχριστος τὴν κυριακὴν, sc. ἡμέραν;) added to that of John, "that he was in the Spirit on the *Lord's day*," and to that of the epistle of Barnabas (which belongs to the apostolic age,) viz. that Christians "keep the eighth day [i. e. the first day of the week] as a *joyful holy day*;" these testimonies confirm beyond all reasonable doubt the fact, that the observance, and the special religious observance, of the Lord's day was practised by Christians, and by all of every sect and name, from the very age of the apostles. Nothing can be more erroneous than to represent the ancient church as halting or divided about the observance of the *resurrection-day*, i. e. the first day of the week. It was about the seventh day or Jewish sabbath, that all the disputes arose which were of a sabbatical nature.

But conceding the point, that the *first day* of the week has been kept by Christians, from the apostolic age, as a day sacred to social worship, still, is there any good evidence that this day was regarded in such a way as the Jewish sabbath had been, and that it was kept with any thing like the same degree of strictness? Our next note will throw some light on these questions.

APPENDIX B.

The important testimony of Eusebius, (fl. 320,) in the time of Constantine, has been unaccountably overlooked, by all the patristical investigators whom I have been yet able to consult. It is contained in his Commentary on the Psalms, which is printed in Montfaucon's *Collectio Nova Patrum*; and some of it is exceedingly to our purpose, and withal very explicit.

In commenting on Psalm xxi, 30, (xxii, 29, in our English version) he says, "On each day of our Saviour's resurrection, [i. e. every first day of the week,] which is called *Lord's day*, we may see those who partake of the consecrated food and that body [of Christ] which has a saving efficacy, after the eating of it, bowing down to him:" pp. 85, 86.

Again, on Psalm xlv, 6, (xlvi, 5) he says, "I think that he [the Psalmist] describes the morning assemblies, *in which we are accustomed to convene throughout the world*:" p. 195.

On Psalm lviii, 17, (lix, 16) he says, "By this is prophetically signified, the service which is performed very early and every morning of the resurrection-day [i. e. the first day of the week] throughout the whole world:" p. 272.

But by far the most important passage of all, remains to be adduced. It is in his commentary on Psalm xci, (xcii) which is entitled, *A psalm or song for the sabbath-day*. He begins his commentary by stating, that the patriarchs had not the legal Jewish sabbath; but still, “given to the contemplation of divine things, and meditating day and night upon the divine word, they spent holy sabbaths which were acceptable to God.” Then, observing that the Psalm before him has reference to a sabbath, he refers it to the *Lord’s day*, and says, that “it exhorts to those things which are to be done on resurrection-day.” He then states the precept respecting the sabbath, as addressed originally to the Jews, and that they often violated it. After which he thus proceeds, “Wherefore as they rejected it [the sabbatical command] THE WORD, [Christ] *by the New Covenant*, TRANSLATED AND TRANSFERRED THE FEAST OF THE SABBATH *to the morning light, and gave us the symbol of true rest, viz. THE SAVING LORD’S DAY, the first [day] of the light*, in which the Saviour of the world, after all his labours among men, obtained the victory over death, and passed the portals of heaven, having achieved a work superior to the six days’ creation. On this day, *which is the first [day] of light and of the true Sun, we assemble, after an interval of six days, and CELEBRATE HOLY AND SPIRITUAL SABBATHS, even all nations redeemed by him throughout the world, AND DO THOSE THINGS ACCORDING TO THE SPIRITUAL LAW, which were decreed for the priests to do on the sabbath*; for we make spiritual offerings and sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise and rejoicing; we make incense of a good odour to ascend, as it is said, ‘Let my prayer come up before thee as incense.’ Yea, we also present the shew-bread, reviving the remembrance of our salvation, the blood of sprinkling, which is of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, and which purifies our souls. . . . Moreover we are diligent to do zealously, on that day, the things enjoined in this Psalm; by word and work making confession to the Lord, and singing in the name of the Most High. In the morning also, with the first rising of our light, we proclaim the mercy of God toward us; also his truth by night, exhibiting a *sober and chaste demeanour*; AND ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER THAT IT WAS DUTY TO DO ON THE SABBATH [Jewish seventh day] THESE WE HAVE TRANSFERRED TO THE LORD’S DAY, *as more appropriately belonging to it, because IT HAS A PRECEDENCE and IS FIRST IN RANK, AND MORE HONOURABLE THAN THE JEWISH SABBATH. For on*

that day, in making the world, 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light;' and on the same day, the Sun of righteousness arose upon our souls. WHEREFORE IT IS DELIVERED TO US, [παράδοδοται, it is handed down by tradition,] THAT WE SHOULD MEET TOGETHER ON THIS DAY; and it is ordered that we should do those things announced in this Psalm."

After some interval, he speaks again of the title to the Psalm, and says, that it does not so much respect the Jewish sabbath, for "*it signifies the LORD'S DAY and the resurrection-day*, as we have proved in other places." "This scripture teaches, [that we are to spend the Lord's day,] *in leisure for religious exercises* (τῶν θείων ἀσχίσεων,) and IN CESSATION AND VACATION, FROM ALL BODILY AND MORTAL WORKS, *which the scripture calls sabbath and rest.*"

This testimony is so full, so ample, so express, as to supersede all necessity for comment. It touches both public worship and private demeanour. It expressly declares, that the usages of the Jewish sabbath (so far as the nature of the case will permit) are transferred to the Christian sabbath; *that Christ himself made this transfer*; that Christians are to abstain from all bodily labour on the Lord's day; and that they should honour it above all other days, by spiritual offerings and works of piety.

Let it be remembered, now, that this testimony comes from the ancient historian of the Christian church, who had searched more thoroughly into its usages and antiquities, than any other man in the early ages. It comes, moreover, from no bigot. Eusebius was himself a man of an enlightened and vigorous mind, and very little influenced by superstition.

When all these things are put together, and it is remembered that he repeatedly asserts the keeping of the Lord's day *throughout the Christian world*, how can any fair-minded man well doubt, whether the Christians of old kept this day sacred, and kept it so as not only to vie with, but to outdo the Jews, in all the spiritual and holy duties of its consecrated hours?

When we are called upon, then, to give reasons why we keep the *first* day of the week holy; our answer is, that we follow the example of the apostles and early Christians. We conform to a practice, which is in itself reasonable, inasmuch as Christ rose upon this day; and which was sanctioned so far as we can trace, by all Christians for many centuries. And if we are further asked, how we can build the sanctity of the sabbath on the fourth commandment, and yet not keep the *seventh* day of the week, which that enjoins to be

kept; my answer would be, that we build on the fourth commandment nothing more than what may be deduced from the fact, that it was a republication of the original law respecting the sabbath, which was first sanctioned at the beginning of the world, and adapted to all the human race. *One seventh part of the time* is the essence of this command. The particular day may depend on circumstances, and cannot be essential. It is important, however, that Christians should be agreed as to the day; and nothing better than the ancient usage of the church can be suggested or adopted.

One thing appears altogether certain to my mind, viz. that where there is no sabbath, there will be no christianity; and where the sabbath is not *strictly* kept, fervent piety, like that of the primitive age of the church, may be looked for in vain.

APPENDIX C.

No valid objections can be made to the *really retired walk*, for the sake of contemplation and bodily refreshment, which the writer here allows. But all walking in company, in public roads or places, or where one is exposed to the public eye, is to be carefully shunned; inasmuch as it cannot answer the purposes of religious contemplation, and it will most certainly be misconstrued by the world.

APPENDIX D.

I have no doubt that the meaning of the writer here is good; for the preceding paragraphs show, that he is far from supposing that the sabbath is to be a day for the indulgence of *idleness*. Yet *arduous toil* must come upon the ministers of the gospel on this day; yea, upon all teachers of religion to any considerable extent. In times like the present, who is there even among private Christians, who (I mean) that is well informed and able to teach, that should not think himself bound to labour for the advancement of the true interests of religion? When the success of the gospel, like that in the primitive ages of Christianity, shall again bless a perishing world, it will come in intimate connection with efforts and devotedness like those of the early Christians. The Millennium itself will come, whenever all Christians shall pray, and labour, and teach, and give their property to promote the interests of the church, as the primitive disciples of Jesus did.

GUIDE
TO THE
INSTRUCTION OF YOUNG PERSONS
IN THE
Holy Scriptures;
INCLUDING
THE LOCK AND KEY,
OR
PASSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH TESTIFY OF JESUS CHRIST,
EXPLAINED BY OTHERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

GUIDE.

TIMOTHY was commended by an apostle because, from a child, he had *known* the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ. And it is surely the indispensable duty of parents and schoolmasters not only to accustom their children or pupils to the reading and hearing of the best of all books, but to train them in the KNOWLEDGE of it. In order to this end, their own faculties must be excited to action: they must be taught to search the Scriptures *for themselves*.

An individual, much interested in this subject, was engaged, about ten years ago, in visiting a large public school; and although the children daily heard a portion of the Scriptures, he found them, on close examination, very ignorant of their contents. After all of them who could read the Bible had been provided with a copy of it, he left with them the proposition which forms the first part of the present little Tract, and promised to come again to them, after a certain period, in order to examine them on the plan marked out in it. The result was, in a high degree, satisfactory. The children, who understood that they would be rewarded according to their proficiency, (provided their *conduct* should correspond with their knowledge,) set themselves assiduously to work, applying to this

purpose parts of their play hours, and much of the Sabbath day. At the end of a year, the second examination took place; and it might be truly said that the face of the school was changed. The children had obtained a varied and extensive knowledge of Scripture; and it was the united testimony of their teachers, that their conduct and general demeanour was in consequence much improved. Indeed a blessing seemed to have rested, in connection with this Christian undertaking, both on the pupils and on their instructors. The same system has been continued in the school alluded to, up to the present period; and, after so long experience, the value of the tree has been amply evinced by the abundance of its fruit.

It ought to be observed, that the efforts of the children are greatly assisted by the tutors, each of whom superintends, during an hour or two on the Sabbath day, a class for Scripture instruction; and they are in the almost daily habit, after the Scriptures have been read to the children, of questioning them on that which they have heard.

The same plan has been since introduced into many other schools, with good effect; and it is equally applicable to families of children educated at home. May all who have the care of children be diligent in communicating to them the knowledge of divine truth, and thus sowing the seed of the kingdom. As their dependence is entirely placed on the LORD, and on the work of his Spirit, there is reason to believe, that they may safely expect his blessing, and that the harvest will, in due time, be abundant.

PROPOSITION

FOR

THE EXAMINATION OF YOUNG PERSONS

IN

The Holy Scriptures.

THE PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ACQUAINTED—

I. *With the Books of the Bible.*—They must be able to state the order of these books; their principal contents; and the names of their authors, if known; and they must be able to repeat some of the most striking passages.

II. *With the History of the Bible.*—They must make themselves acquainted with the most interesting and important circumstances recorded in the Bible, from the History of the Creation to that of the apostles; and they must be able to explain in what respects they display the Providence of God, the happiness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked.

III. *With the Types and Prophecies of the Bible.*—The Pupils must be able to point out and explain the most important types, and all the principal prophecies, which relate to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and they must be conversant with the passages in the New Testament, in which some of the types and prophecies are so applied by our Lord himself, or by his disciples.

IV. *With the Doctrines of the Bible.*—They must be able to point out the most striking passages in Holy Writ, which prove or elucidate the Love, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Moral Government, and Omnipresence of the Almighty; the fall, and natural corruption of man; the Divine Character of Jesus Christ; and Redemption which He wrought for us—

1. In dying for our sins;
2. In saving us from sin, thus procuring for us eternal life—

the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit; the difference between the Old and New Dispensations—the one, legal, typical,

and administered by priests on earth; the other, spiritual, and administered by our great High Priest in heaven; the existence of a future state of happiness or misery; the final judgment of men by Jesus Christ; the fruits of the Spirit—

1. Humility and contrition of mind;
2. Faith;
3. Charity or Love;
4. Meekness, Forbearance, and Forgiveness;
5. Purity of Heart;
6. Watchfulness;
7. Prayer;
8. Honesty, Integrity, and Truth;
9. Patience, and willingness to suffer for Christ's sake;
10. Temperance;
11. Subjection to human authorities;
12. The sacrifice of our natural inclinations, the taking up of our cross, and the dedication of ourselves to God.

THE LOCK AND KEY.

It appears to be a clear and undeniable position, that the actual knowledge of the future is an attribute peculiar to the Divine Being. No one, who admits the existence of the one God, will refuse to allow that, in point of both knowledge and power, he is placed at an infinite distance above all his creatures—that, while he regulates the course of events according to his own will, none of those creatures are his counsellors, and none of them are capable of penetrating his secret designs and intentions. From these premises it follows, that all prophecies, which, by their exact fulfilment, are proved to have proceeded, not from intellectual sagacity and human conjecture, but from actual fore-

knowledge, must have been inspired, or dictated by the Almighty himself; and further, that the religion which is attested by such prophecies is a divinely authorized religion.

That Christianity is attested by true prophecies, is a fact capable of easy proof. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself was a prophet, and, during his conversation among men, accurately predicted a variety of events, which were then future; especially his own death and resurrection, and the circumstances by which they were to be attended; the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; and the approaching sufferings of the Jews, with the destruction of their city and temple. But, perhaps the most striking prophecies, which attest the truth of Christianity, are those contained in the Old Testament, and relating to our Saviour himself. The writings of the Hebrew prophets are replete with the promises of a great spiritual deliverer, denominated the Messiah, who was appointed to appear in the world at a certain period declared by the prophet Daniel. In various parts of these writings (composed as they were by a number of unconnected persons, living at different periods) it is predicted that this long-expected deliverer should arise, according to the flesh, of the seed of Abraham,¹ and from the family of David;² that he should be born miraculously of a virgin;³ that his birth-place should be Bethlehem;⁴ that his outward situation should be of a very humble description;⁵ that he should be engaged in proclaiming

¹ Gen. xxii, 18.

² Isa. xi, 1; Jer. xxiii, 5.

³ Isa. vii, 14.

⁴ Mic. v, 2.

⁵ Isa. liii, 2.

glad tidings, and in relieving the sufferings of mortality;⁶ that his character should be distinguished for gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, and all righteousness;⁷ that, nevertheless, the Jews would refuse to believe in him;⁸ that he should be despised, rejected, and persecuted of men;⁹ that he should be betrayed by one of his familiar friends, and that his followers should be scattered from him;¹ that he should be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and be as a sheep dumb before his shearers;² that he should be cut off, yet not for himself;³ that his body should not see corruption, nor his life be left in the grave;⁴ finally, that he should ascend into heaven;⁵ and that he should exercise a universal and never-ending government over mankind.⁶ In addition to these leading facts, there are predicted, in the Old Testament, a number of minor particulars respecting the life and death of the Messiah; and, to complete their wonderful statements, the prophets, whilst they depict the circumstances of his human nature, and especially his many humiliating sufferings, describe him nevertheless as *one possessing the name and character of Jehovah himself*.⁷

At the time appointed for the appearance of the Messiah, Jesus was born of the seed of Abraham, of the family of David, at Bethlehem, of a virgin. We

⁶ Isa. lxi, 1. ⁷ Isa. xi, 4—6; xliii, 1—3. ⁸ Isa. liii, 1.

⁹ Isa. liii, 3, 4; Psa. xxii.

¹ Psa. xli, 9; Zech. xiii, 7. ² Isa. liii, 7.

³ Dan. ix, 26. ⁴ Psa. xvi, 10. ⁵ Psa. lxviii, 18.

⁶ Psa. lxxii, 8; Isa. ix, 7; Dan. vii, 14.

⁷ Psa. xlv, 6; Isa. vii, 14; ix, 6; xxxv, 4; xl, 3, 10, 11; Jer. xxiii, 5; Zech. ii, 10—13; Mal. iii, 1.

find him living in an humble outward condition—engaged in preaching the gospel, in healing the sick, and in relieving every species of bodily and mental distress—meek, gentle, kind, faithful, and fulfilling all righteousness—not believed in by the Jews—despised, rejected, and persecuted of men—betrayed by his familiar friend—forsaken in the hour of trial by all his followers—led as a lamb to the slaughter—dumb in the presence of his persecutors—cut off, but not for himself—rising from the dead—ascending into heaven, and assuming a spiritual government over men—fulfilling, in his own character and circumstances, a variety of minor particulars—and *all these things in precise accordance with the predictions of the Old Testament*. More particularly, in the midst of his humiliations and distresses, and notwithstanding the lowliness and piety of his human character, we find him, in agreement with those predictions, receiving the homage, asserting the character, displaying the powers, and described by the titles, which appertain to Jehovah himself.⁸

When a lock and key precisely correspond, though they be of a simple character, a presumption arises that they were intended for one another. When, instead of being formed in a simple manner, they are respectively complex and curiously wrought in different directions, and nevertheless correspond; such a

⁸ Matt. xiv, 33; John xx, 28, 29; Matt. ix, 2—6; xii, 6, 8; xviii, 20; John v, 21—23; x, 28—30; xiv, 9, 23; xvi, 7; Rev. ii, 23; Matt. viii, 3, 8—13; *comp.* Acts ix, 34; Luke viii, 24; Matt. xii, 25; John xvi, 19, 30; *comp.* John i, 1; Rev. ii, 23; John xx, 22; Rom. ix, 5; Rev. xix, 16.

presumption is exceedingly strengthened. But when the lock is not only complex and curiously wrought, but contains such an extraordinary and wonderful combination of parts, as to be absolutely *sui generis*, and without parallel; when, among all the keys in the world, none present even a slight approach to a correspondent conformation, except one; and by that the lock is easily and exactly fitted—then, surely, is all doubt on the subject discarded; and it becomes a moral certainty that the lock and key proceeded from the same master-hand, and truly appertain to each other. Now this is a familiar, but precise, representation of the evidence afforded by a comparison between the Old and New Testaments, that the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were true prophecies; that they were inspired by an omniscient God; and, therefore, that the religion which they attest, is a religion of divine origin.

PASSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,
WHICH TESTIFY OF JESUS CHRIST,
EXPLAINED BY OTHERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

OLD TESTAMENT.	" Search the Scriptures—for they are they which testify of me:" John v, 39.	NEW TESTAMENT.
Gen. iii, 15	Victory of Christ over Satan	1 John iii, 8, Heb. ii, 11, Gal. iv, 4, 5
— xxii, 16, 18	All nations blessed in Christ	Gal. iii, 8, 16, <i>comp.</i> Psa. lxxii, 17
— xxvi, 2, 4	The coming of Shiloh or Christ, and the gathering of the people to him	Luke i, 30-33, John xii, 32
— xlix, 10	Christ, the Star out of Jacob	Rev. xxii, 16
Numb. xxiv, 15-19	Christ, the Prophet like unto Moses	Acts iii, 20-22
Deut. xviii, 15, 18	Christ the Redeemer shall stand in the latter days upon the earth	Phil. iii, 20, 21
Job xix, 23, 27	Christ conspired against by the Rulers	Acts iv, 25, 28
Psa. ii, 1, 2	Christ, the Son of God, raised from the dead to be a King	Acts xiii, 33
— ii, 6, 8	All things made subject to Christ	Heb. ii, 6-9
— viii, 4-6	The Resurrection of Christ	Acts ii, 25-32
— xvi, 8-11	The sufferings of Christ	Matt. xxvii, 35-46
— xxii, 1-8, 16, 18	Christ come to do the will of God	Heb. x, 5-10
— xl, 6-8	Christ betrayed by Judas Iscariot	John xiii, 21-30, Acts i, 16, 17
— xli, 9, lv, 12-15	The kingdom and deity of Christ	Heb. i, 8, 9, <i>comp.</i> Rom. ix, 5
— xlv, 1-7	Christ, the author of spiritual gifts	Eph. iv, 8, 11, 12
— lxxviii, 18, 19	Gall given to Christ for drink	Matt. xxvi, 34, 48
— lxxix, 21	Spiritual dominion of Christ	Eph. i, 20-23
— lxxxii	The same subject	Col. i, 15-19
— lxxxix, 19-29	Christ coming to Judgment	Matt. xxiv, 29-31, xxv, 31-46
— xcvi, 1-7	Christ, the Lord of David, and a Priest for ever	Matt. xxii, 41-46, Heb. v, 5, 6, vi, 19, 20
— xcvi, 7-9	Christ, the stone refused by the builders	Matt. xxi, 42-44, Eph. ii, 19-22
— cx, 1-4		
— cxviii, 22, 23		

OLD TESTAMENT.	"Search the Scriptures—for they are they which testify of me:" John v, 39.	NEW TESTAMENT.
Prov. viii, 23-36	Christ, the Wisdom of God, with the Father in the beginning	1 Cor. i, 24, John i, 1, John xvii, 5
— xxx, 4	Christ, the Son of God	Matt. xvii, 5
Isa. ii, 1-5, and Mic. iv, 1-4	Conversion of the Gentiles to faith in Christ	John x, 16, Acts xxviii, 28
— vi, 14	Christ born of a virgin	Matt. i, 20-23
— viii, 13, 14	Christ, a stumbling stone to the unbelieving Jews	Rom. ix, 33, 1 Pet. ii, 7, 8
— ix, 6, 7	Christ, the Child born unto us	Luke ii, 10-14
— xi, 1-10	Christ, the branch out of the root of Jesse	Acts xiii, 20-23
— xxviii, 16	Christ, the chief corner stone	1 Pet. ii, 3-6
— xxxii, 1-3	Christ, the Prince of his people	Acts v, 31
— xxxiv, 1-10	Christ, in the day of wrath	Rev. vi, 12-17
— xxxv, 3-6	The Miracles of Christ	Matt. xi, 2-6
— xl, 3-5	John, the forerunner of Christ	Matt. iii, 1-3, Mark i, 3, 4
— xlii, 1-7	Humility of Christ, and conversion of the Gentiles	Matt. xii, 14-21, Acts xxvi, 22, 23
— xlv, 22-25	Power and glory of Christ	Rom. xiv, 10, 12, Phil. ii, 9-11
— xlix, 5-12	Christ, the Light of the Gentiles, and the Saviour of the world	Acts xiii, 44-49
— liii, 1-3	Christ not believed in, and rejected by the Jews	John xii, 37, 38
— liii, 4-12	Sufferings and sacrifice of Christ for the sake of men	Acts viii, 26-35, 1 Pet. ii, 21-25
— lv, 1-5	Living water or the Holy Spirit given through Christ	John iv, 10-14, Rev. xxii, 16, 17
— lx, 18-22	Christ, the glory of his Church	Rev. xxi, 23-27
— lxi, 1-3	Christ anointed by the Spirit	Luke iv, 16-21, Matt. iii, 16, 17
— lxiii, 1-6	Christ punishing his enemies	Rev. xix, 11-16
Jer. xxiii, 5-6	Christ our Righteousness, raised up to save his people	Luke i, 67-75, 1 Cor. i, 30, 2 Cor. v, 21
— xxxi, 31-44	The spiritual nature of the Christian dispensation	Heb. viii, 6-13
Ezek. xxxiv, 20-31	Christ, under the character of David, described as our Shepherd	John x, 11-16, 1 Pet. ii, 25
— xxvii, 24-28		
— xxxvi, 25-28	A new heart given to the people of God, that is, to believers in Christ	1 Cor. vi, 9-11, Eph. iv, 20-24
Dan. ii, 44, 45	Kingdom of Christ prevailing over all other powers	Matt. iii, 2, John xviii, 36, Eph. i, 20-23

OLD TESTAMENT.	' Search the Scriptures—for they are they which testify of me:' John v, 39.	NEW TESTAMENT.
Dan. iii, 24, 25	Christ, the Son of God, ever present with his people	Matt. xviii, 20, xxviii, 20, <i>comp.</i> Isa. xliiii, 1, 2
— vii, 13, 14	Dominion & Majesty of Christ, the Son of Man	Matt. xxvi, 64, xxviii, 18, Rev. i, 5-8
— ix, 25-27	The time which was appointed for the coming of Christ	1 Pet. i, 20, 21
— xii, 1-3	Coming of Christ in Judgment, and Resurrection of the Dead	Matt. xiii, 40-43, xiv, 29-31, Rev. xx, 11-15
Joel ii, 28-32	Effusion of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Christ	Acts ii, 1-21
Jonah i, 17	Jonah in the whale's belly, pre-figuring Christ in the grave	Matt. xii, 38-40
Micah v, 2-4	Christ born at Bethlehem	Matt. ii, 3-6, Luke, ii, 4-7
Hag. ii, 6-9	Christ, the desire of all nations, appeared in the second temple	Luke ii, 25-32, <i>comp.</i> Gen. xxii, 18, xlix, 10.
Zech. ii, 10-13	Christ, the LORD, manifested in the flesh, and dwelling with his people	John i, 14, 1 Tim. iii, 16
— ix, 9, 10	The entry of Christ into Jerusalem, upon an ass	Matt. xxi, 1-9
— v, 11	The blood of Christ's Covenant delivers from the bondage of sin	Col. i, 12-14, Eph. ii, 13
— xii, 10	The people mourn for Christ, whom they have pierced	John xix, 33-37, Rev. i, 7
— xiii, 7	The fellowship of Christ with the Father. The Shepherd smitten, and flock scattered	John xvii, 21, Matt. xxvi, 31-56
Mal. iii, 1	John, the forerunner of Christ	Mark i, 2-4
— iii, 2, 3	The Spirit of Christ powerful to redeem from sin	Matt. iii, 11, 12, Titus ii, 13, 14
— iv, 5, 6	John, in the spirit and power of Elijah, prepared the way of Christ	Luke i, 13-17, Matt. xi, 11-14

ON

THE MORAL CHARACTER

OF

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

FROM THE AMETHYST FOR MDCCCXXXII.

MORAL CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

AMONG the many glorious particulars which distinguish Christianity from every other system of religion, is the moral character of its Founder, the Lord Jesus Christ—who, in his eternal Godhead, is ONE with the Father, yet took upon him our nature, both soul and body, and is therefore truly and properly MAN.

To delineate the conduct and deportment of a faultless human being would be a peculiarly difficult task to any uninspired writer; an impossible one indeed, had no such being existed. Yet in the New Testament we find the description of a perfect man, sustained with an exactness and evenness which defy the cavils of infidelity.

The first moral quality which we ought to notice in the character of our Saviour, is *purity of heart*. It was his own doctrine that “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”¹ He is described by one apostle, as “a lamb without blemish and without spot;”² and by another as “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”³ It is expressly declared that “he did no sin;”⁴ that “in him is no sin;”⁵ and the

¹ Matt. v, 8.

² 1 Pet. i, 19.

³ Heb. vii, 26.

⁴ 1 Pet. ii, 22.

⁵ 1 John iii, 5.

doctrine of his perfect purity is proved, by the fact, that his death was *expiatory*—for except the offering be spotless, there can be no atonement made by it, for sin.

Isaiah, in prophecy, declared of the Messiah, that “*righteousness*” should be “the girdle of his loins,” and “*faithfulness* the girdle of his reins.”⁶ Such was indeed the fact. An absolute integrity marked his whole deportment, and no “guile” was “found in his mouth.”⁷ He called himself “the Truth,” and contrasted his own veracity with the deceitfulness of Satan, who “is a liar and the father of it.”⁸ The plain wholesome truth he ever spake, both to his friends and to his enemies. The former he flattered with no hopes of ease or advancement; but clearly told them, that the terms of their discipleship were the baptism of suffering, and the bearing of the cross. Before the latter, he made that explicit confession of which the certain consequence was known to be *death*.⁹

Jesus maintained his integrity on all occasions, with an undaunted *courage*. He feared not the fiercest or most insidious of his enemies, but rebuked their hypocrisy in open day. He was ever ready to bear a public and avowed testimony against all iniquity. He boldly pronounced the woes which were about to overwhelm Jerusalem, as well as those other cities, whose guilty inhabitants had disregarded his mighty works and rejected the gospel of salvation.¹

He was filled with a holy *zeal* for the cause of

⁶ Isa. xi, 5.

⁷ 1 Pet. ii, 22.

⁸ John viii, 44.

⁹ Matt. xxvi, 64, 65.

¹ Matt. xi, 21; Luke xxiii, 28, 29.

righteousness and for the honour of God, and while this zeal was displayed both in his words and actions, he never for a moment shrunk from the consequences.

Yet the courage and zeal of Jesus were remarkably distinguished from rashness. It is evident that he did not unnecessarily expose himself to the rage of his enemies, but evinced a singular degree of *prudence* in avoiding the dangers which surrounded him, often retiring from the tumults of the world, and consulting for the safety of himself and his companions, in solitary places. Until his hour was come, he never suffered himself to fall under the power of his enemies; and all their attempts to destroy him were utterly fruitless. He would not tempt God by throwing himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, when duty did not call for the sacrifice.²

Closely connected with the quality of courage, is that of *fortitude*. The latter virtue was displayed by our Lord in a wonderful manner after he had been betrayed into the hands of his enemies. The conflict which he had undergone in the garden of Gethsemane, and his solemn communion there with his heavenly Father, appeared to be a preparation for that perfect fearlessness with which he met a cruel and ignominious death. It was a signal proof of the firmness with which he endured his agonies, as well as of the kindness of his spirit, that, while he was hanging on the cross, his mind was directed even to the temporal welfare of his friends: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy

² Matt. iv, 7.

son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!"³

In conformity with his own precept, Jesus was not only harmless as the dove, but *wise* as the serpent.⁴ He shunned the breath of popularity, and suffered not his admirers to take him away by force to make him a king.⁵ He strictly forbid any premature publication of his office, as the Messiah. The degrees in which he unfolded the doctrines of religion were remarkably proportioned to the moral capacities of his hearers.⁶ He never cast his pearls before swine. He displayed a perfect skill in silencing the cavils of his opposers, and in turning against the unbelieving Jews the weapons of that mode of argument to which they were accustomed.

His divine wisdom was also pre-eminently manifested, in his method of teaching; particularly in the exquisite simplicity and appositeness of his parables, and in his converting every object which attracted his attention, into a channel for instruction. Who, for example, that has once read the story of Jesus at the well of Samaria, will ever forget the discourse which the waters of that well occasioned?⁷

"The Son of man" came "eating and drinking."⁸ The moderate enjoyment of the blessings of the earth, with *giving of thanks*, he encouraged by his example. The quality which he evinced at the marriage feast of Cana, when he mingled with the joyful company and turned the water into wine, was *holy liberality*. The

³ John xix, 26.

⁴ Matt. x, 26.

⁵ John vi, 15.

⁶ Matt. xiii, 11, 36.

⁷ John iv, 10—14.

⁸ Matt. xi, 19.

same attribute he carried with him into the wilderness, when with public thanksgiving he brake the bread, and so multiplied the five barley loaves and the few small fishes, that they became the superabundant food of five thousands of persons. Yet although Jesus was no ascetic, he triumphed over bodily indulgence, and willingly submitted to the severest personal privations, for righteousness' sake. When the spirit so led him, he fasted, in the wilderness, during "forty days and forty nights."⁹ What could surpass the sublime self-denial of his answer, when after this long abstinence from food, the devil tempted him to convert the stones into bread? "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."¹

Jesus Christ displayed during his whole mortal career a perfect *disinterestedness*. He steadily refused all worldly riches, honour, and dominion.² He led a life of deep poverty. Although "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests," the Son of man, had not "where to lay his head."³ For the sake of our degraded and fallen race, he suffered "his visage to be so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."⁴

But we must follow our Lord to Gethsemane, and mark his agony and bloody sweat; we must call to mind his crown of thorns and the mockery of his cruel enemies; we must behold him bearing his cross; we must accompany him to Calvary's mount; we must reflect on the anguish and dark horrors of his

⁹ Matt. iv, 2.¹ Matt. iv, 4.² Matt. iv, 9, 10.³ Matt. viii, 20.⁴ Isa. lii, 14.

death, when the burden of the sins of all men was resting upon him ; and with this depth of humiliation and suffering, we must compare the elevation of his former condition, the unutterable happiness and glory from which he abstained.⁵ Thus, and thus alone, can we form any adequate notion of his *self-renunciation*.

This self-renunciation was prompted by pure *benevolence*—a quality which, perhaps above all others, abounded in the character of our Saviour. His soul was filled with tenderness. The near approach of his own sufferings did not prevent his weeping over the woes of Jerusalem. Towards his believing children his sympathies were always alive. “In all their afflictions he was afflicted.” He wept with the weepers.⁶ His miracles, for the most part, were works of the tenderest mercy and compassion, as well as of power. His benevolence indeed was productive of unceasing *beneficence*. He “went about doing good,”⁷ preaching the gospel to the poor ; giving bread to the hungry, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the withered, health to the sick, and life to the very dead.

Nor was his love restricted to his friends ; it flowed freely towards his enemies. The most intense provocation and suffering could never dispossess him of that blessed principle which he had publicly proclaimed, that good must be returned for evil. In the midst of the bitterness of death, he prayed for his persecutors, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”⁸

⁵ Phil. ii, 6, 7.

⁶ John xi, 35.

⁷ Acts x, 38.

⁸ Luke xxiii, 34.

His tenderness towards children was a remarkable trait in his character. He would allow no man to drive them away from him. He took them up in his arms and blessed them. He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."⁹

The vigour and indignation which Jesus displayed in the reproof of vicious men, may be profitably compared with his *meekness* and *quietness in suffering*. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."¹ He bore the contradiction of sinners, and the taunts of his oppressors, with immoveable patience. He appears to have possessed an absolute command over every natural feeling. He was, in the highest degree, *long-suffering*. His temper was smooth as the dove's—ineapable of being ruffled.

Equally instructive is the contrast between the supreme dignity of Jesus and his *lowliness*. He never forsook that just self-respect which leads to the inviolate maintenance of the rightful post of duty. Wherever he went, he carried about with him the dignity of a perfect virtue; and to this was often added the mysterious energy of a divine power. How awful must have been the influence of his presence, when he walked on the surface of the deep, and when, on his entering into the ship, the wind ceased;² when he drove out the buyers and sellers from the temple;³

⁹ Matt. xix, 14.

¹ 1 Pet. ii, 23.

² Matt. xiv, 25—32.

³ Matt. xxi, 12.

when the Gadarenes having seen his works besought him to depart out of their coasts;⁴ when even Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;"⁵ and when the armed band of his pursuers, involuntarily "went backward and fell to the ground."⁶ Yet this glorious Being is expressly declared to have been "lowly in heart."⁷ He numbered himself with the poor and needy. He was subject, during his youth, to his earthly parents.⁸ He came not "to be ministered unto, but to minister."⁹ He performed for his disciples the lowest offices of kindness and courtesy.¹

Christianity teaches us that the *love of God* is the foundation of all moral excellence; and Jesus exemplified this doctrine in his whole life, which was one of unexampled, uninterrupted, *godliness*. He delighted in communion with his heavenly Father. He spent whole nights in prayer. His devotional spirit was often called into peculiar exercise, as a preparation for some high duty or some mighty work; for example, before the choice of his apostles;² before the raising of Lazarus;³ and in Gethsemane, before he suffered.⁴ Nor was it for himself alone that he communed with his God; his soul overflowed with intercession. Nothing can be conceived more sublime and touching than the strains in which he prayed for his disciples.⁵

Finally, he was perfectly conformed to the will of

⁴ Matt. viii, 34.

⁵ Luke v, 8.

⁶ John xviii, 6.

⁷ Matt. xi, 29.

⁸ Luke ii, 51.

⁹ Matt. xx, 28.

¹ John xiii, 5.

² Luke vi, 12—14.

³ John xi, 41.

⁴ Matt. xxvi, 36—40.

⁵ John xvii; *comp.* Luke xxii, 32.

his Father. In obedience to that will, he came down from heaven; in obedience to it, he lived and died on earth. "My meat," said he, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."⁶ Again—"O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."⁷ "Not my will, but thine be done."⁸

Such was the moral character of the Saviour of men; a matchless and most astonishing combination of purity, integrity, fidelity, courage, zeal, prudence, fortitude, liberality, temperance, disinterestedness, heavenly mindedness, gentleness, meekness, humility, patience, and charity—all founded on an immeasurable love towards God, even the Father, and on a perfect obedience to his will.

Here it ought to be remarked that as the followers of Jesus, in their pursuit of moral excellence, are taught to place their dependence on the influence of the Spirit of God, so Christ, their holy Head, was endued with the same influence, but *without measure*.⁹ He was the "anointed one" of the Father; the Spirit descended "like a dove, and rested upon him."¹ "Through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot to God."² He produced, in unspeakable ripeness and abundance, that "fruit of the Spirit" which is "in all goodness and righteousness and truth;"³ and which, in a lesser measure, is borne by all those who love, serve, and follow him.

⁶ John iv, 34.

⁷ Matt. xxvi, 39.

⁸ Luke xxii, 42.

⁹ John iii, 34.

¹ Matt. iii, 16.

² Heb. ix, 14.

³ Eph v, 9

The subject which we have now been contemplating, is of deep importance and interest as it relates, first, to *evidence*; secondly, to *doctrine*; and thirdly, to *practice*.

1. *Evidence*.—Although in forming a digest of the character of our Lord, we have endeavoured to describe its several features in succession, this is not the method which the evangelists have adopted. A panegyric of their divine Master, in whatsoever degree just and merited, and a formal declaration of his virtues, however true and incontrovertible, was no part of the plan of these authors. They were engaged in the simple duty of faithful narration; and the character of their Lord *comes out*, and is *made apparent*, as it were by accident, in the history of those various events by which it was tried, and in the course of which it was unfolded.

The simplicity and native charm of the narrative are such as no fiction can imitate. And let it be remembered that the history of the life and death of Jesus, is recorded by *four* writers, each of whom (while they state *many* things in common) contributes to the stock of information respecting him, a variety of particulars to which the others have not adverted. The complete and faultless character of Jesus stands out to view, as the glorious result of their combined descriptions.

That the delineation of such a person should be sustained, even by a single writer, without any lapse, and should produce a portrait without any blemish, would be extremely improbable, were the tale fictitious. But that so many distinct, and evidently inde-

pendent writers, should have described the conduct and deportment of Jesus, under so great a variety of circumstances, and still no inconsistency be found in the narrative, no flaw in the character—is a fact for which nothing can possibly account, but the truth of the whole statement.

Since then our Saviour's character, as pourtrayed in the New Testament, was real, we may receive it as a sure evidence, that the religion which he taught is *divine*. For in the first place, we are bound by the laws of testimony, by plain reason, and by common sense, to receive as *true*, whatsoever was affirmed by a man of *perfect* morality. And secondly, the character of Jesus, considered as an essential part of a religious system, is in itself a strong internal proof that God—the Fountain of all virtue and loveliness—is the Author of Christianity. In vain should we search for the description of such a character in the pages either of profane history, or of uninspired philosophy. It stands unrivalled and alone, a masterpiece of divine wisdom and power, stamped with the image of the most high God.

There is an exact agreement between the moral attributes of God, as unfolded in Scripture, and the law revealed for the government of mankind in the same book. Again there is a perfect accordance between that law, and the example of Jesus Christ. In the example the law is *embodied*. Who then, but God himself, can be the Author either of the law or the pattern?

2. *Doctrine*.—The character of the Son of God is inseparably connected with a cardinal doctrine of

Christianity. On the meritorious fulfilment of the moral law by the Saviour of men—on his absolute conformity to the will of God—on the fulness of his obedience and virtue—rests the believer's hope of everlasting happiness. Christ is "Jehovah—*our Righteousness.*"⁴ He is made *unto us* of God "*righteousness.*"⁵ "God hath made him to be sin (or a sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him.*"⁶ The righteousness "imputed" to us through faith in Jesus,⁷ is the righteousness of Jesus himself; and God in his infinite condescension deals with his believing children *as if, like their divine Master, they had fulfilled his whole law.* Hence it follows, that as we receive the forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from all its penalties, in consequence of the atoning death of Christ; so, in consequence of his meritorious and perfect obedience, we become *invested* with a claim on the joys of eternity. By virtue of our union with our holy Head—and on no other ground whatsoever—do we look forward, with peaceful expectation, to an entrance into those mansions, which he is gone before to prepare for us, and where we shall dwell with him for ever.⁸

3. *Practice.*—“As He which hath called you is holy,” says the apostle Peter, “so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”⁹ This precept may be compared with that of our Lord himself, “Be ye therefore

⁴ Jer. xxiii, 6.

⁵ 1 Cor. i, 30.

⁶ 2 Cor. v, 21.

⁷ Rom. iv, 6—11.

⁸ John xiv, 2.

⁹ 1 Pet. i, 15, 16; *comp.* Lev. xi, 44.

perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”¹ It is the glory of Christianity, that it is the means of restoring lost and sinful man to that image of his Creator, in which our first parents were made; and that those who imbibe the principles of the gospel, are enabled to become, although at an incomprehensible distance, “*followers of God.*”²

But since God and his attributes are infinite, and, in various respects, above our reach, and since we are called to the practice of many virtues, which peculiarly belong to our dependent state as creatures, it is a delightful evidence of the love of our heavenly Father, that in his incarnate Son, he has provided us with a model, at once perfect and accommodated to all our need. Perpetually to keep that model in view—to reflect on its beautiful proportions, and faultless structure—to endeavour to mould our motives, thoughts, and actions into the same form—will be found an efficacious means of acquiring that character and condition of mind, without which we cannot be fitted for the purity of heaven. If any man asks the question, What am I to do—how am I to behave myself—that I may fulfil the law of God? the answer is obvious and intelligible, *Imitate the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This is indeed a precept which no man can obey in his own strength. But the believer has inexhaustible resources both in the advocacy of Christ, and in the *grace* of God. The Spirit of Truth is bestowed abundantly on those who seek it; and its “fruit” is

¹ Matt. v, 48.

² Eph. v, 1.

that of "righteousness," to the praise and glory of God.

I will venture, before I conclude, to offer one additional remark. In these days of much polemical discussion, of various clashing opinions, and, I fear, of no little bitterness of spirit among the professed followers of Jesus, it is well for us all to remember, that in Scripture, his example is presented to us with an especial reference to love and union, humility and condescension, patience and forbearance. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."³ "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."⁴ "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to (in the margin, *after the example of*) Christ Jesus."⁵ "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves; look not every man at his own things, but every man also on the things of others; *let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*"⁶ &c. "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*"⁷

³ John xiii, 14, 15.

⁴ John xv, 12.

⁵ Rom. xv, 5.

⁶ Phil. ii, 2—5.

⁷ 1 Pet. ii, 20, 21.

It is of the highest importance to the cause of true religion, that all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, should keep the watch over their own spirits, and pray for ability to fulfil these injunctions. In order to this end, let us cultivate a sense of our own ignorance and weakness, and dwell in deep humility before God. Let us be more ready to cast the beam out of our own eye, than to attempt to extract the mote out of the eye of a brother. And while we adhere with unalterable firmness to the truth "as it is in Jesus," let our religion be the religion of *principle*, rather than of *opinion*—of the *heart*, rather than of the *head*.

Thus will the church of Christ be restored to her ancient beauty, strength, and harmony; and her influence will gradually spread over a dark and degenerate world. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."⁸

⁸ Isa. xi, 8, 9.

CHRISTIANITY
A RELIGION OF MOTIVES.

FROM THE AMETHYST FOR MDCCCXXXIII.

CHRISTIANITY, &c.

“THE Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” Not only are our overt actions manifest in his sight, but the secret springs by which they are excited and put in motion, although often deeply hidden from our fellow-creatures, are ever exposed to his penetrating eye.

Hence it follows that, while false religions are in their nature superficial, and produce little effect on the hearts of their votaries, true religion dives at once into the recesses of the soul. It detects our corruption, unfolds the heart-searching spirituality of the law, and brings into play the purest and most powerful motives by which a rational creature can be actuated. Such are the nature and character of Christianity, and such is the proof afforded by its very structure, that it is to be ascribed not to the inventions of dark and erring man, but to the perfect wisdom and skill of an omnipotent Being.

The sinner, when first awakened to a sense of the holiness of God, of his own sinfulness, and of his condemnation by the law, often trembles with horror in the view of his danger. The prospect before him is for a time one of unutterable darkness, and the Lord appears to him even as a dreadful and terrible God. Yet it is not only under the first effect of con-

viction for sin, that the powerful motive of *fear* is brought into action in the mind of man. Even after we have obtained peace with God, through faith in our adorable Redeemer, and have become the reconciled children of our heavenly Father, there is much in the system of Christianity, which is calculated to make us tremble.

The view which our religion unfolds of the holiness of Jehovah, of the corruption of our own hearts, and of the awful consequences of sin, can never be rightly entertained, even by the true believer in Jesus, without an accompanying feeling of his utter unworthiness, or without an awful fear of that glorious Being who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." So long as we bear in mind the choice which is set before us of good and evil, and the immense responsibility under which we are placed, *fear* will never fail to occupy an important place in our most sacred feelings.

The fear to which we allude is, however, no slavish principle; it arises out of a right sense of the attributes of God, who is holy, just, and true; and as a motive to Christian obedience it is of vast and unceasing importance: "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." The graces into which it immediately leads, are circumspection, watchfulness, temperance, and self-denial.

But although *fear* is thus found to be an invaluable motive to the Christian believer, it would be utterly unavailing for every practical purpose, were it suffered to degenerate into despair. What cause is it then for gratitude to our heavenly Father, that the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, to throw his warmth and

radiance over the dark clouds of an afflicted conscience! 'The Christian remembers "that the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." He calls to mind the infinite goodness of that Being who is the well-spring of all our happiness; he knows that the love of God towards his unworthy children is unailing; and that His promises in Christ Jesus are secured to the humble and contrite believer, by an everlasting covenant.

Thus he is filled with a good *hope* through grace; and this hope excites the fervour of his spirit, and quickens his footsteps in his race towards heaven. I remember hearing an eminent Scottish divine illustrate the subject of Christian hope as follows, "God has made us two great promises, and therefore the Christian enjoys two leading hopes. The first promise (with its corresponding hope) relates to the present life—it is the promise of *grace*. The second promise (with its corresponding hope) relates to the life to come—it is the promise of *glory*. Let us suppose that some person were to engage to bestow upon us two benefits; the one at the end of a week, and the other at the end of a year. Supposing that we had reason to trust him, a double hope would immediately be raised in our minds. But if, at the end of the week, we found his first promise fulfilled, our remaining hope would rest on a *confirmed* basis—we should then look forward to its accomplishment with a peaceful and unclouded expectation. So it is with the Christian. If he experience in himself the fulfilment of the first divine promise—if his first hope be

realized in the enjoyment and sanctifying influence of the Spirit—he will rest assured that his second hope will never make him ‘ashamed.’ Then will he ‘re-*joice* in the hope of the *glory* of God.’”

I deem it to be of the highest practical importance, that, in the study of the Holy Scriptures, we should never give way to partiality. We must not direct our attention to those parts exclusively which fall in with the favourite impressions of our own minds. We must take the sacred records as they are given to us, and ascribe to every portion of them, its just importance and genuine weight. We must be alike open to those passages which are calculated to excite our fear, and to those which are intended to gladden us with a consoling hope. The following observations were once made to me on this interesting subject, by a pious clergyman, well known in the university of Cambridge.

“I have long pursued the study of Scripture with a desire to be impartial. I call myself, neither a predestinarian, nor an anti-predestinarian; but I commit myself to the teaching of the inspired writers, whatsoever complexion it may assume. In the beginning of my enquiries, I said, I am a fool—of that I am quite certain. One thing I know assuredly—that in religion, of myself I *know nothing*. I do not therefore sit down to the perusal of Scripture, in order to impose a sense on the inspired writers, but to receive one as they give it me. I pretend not to teach them; I wish, like a child, to be taught by them. When I come to a text which speaks of election, I delight myself in the doctrine of election. When the apos-

bles exhort me to repentance and obedience, and indicate the freedom of my will, I give myself up to *that* side of the question. Do you not know, my dear brother, that the wheels of your watch move in opposite directions? Yet they are all tending to one result.

“Let two balls be projected from equal angles—I care not what angle it may be—against a third ball lying before them; and if the forces be even, it will move forward in a line perfectly straight. But if the ball on the right hand be alone projected against the central ball, the latter will fly off to the left. If the left-hand ball is the only one which strikes it, away it rolls to the right! So it is in religion. Hope and fear are the strongest motives which actuate the mind of man. Here comes the doctrine of election, fraught with *hope* and consolation, and strikes the mind of the believer from one quarter. From the opposite quarter comes the doctrine of man’s moral freedom and responsibility, calculated to excite our *fear*. They operate in true harmony, and the believer moves straight forwards.

“Let him embrace the doctrine of election only, and off he goes to the left hand—or the doctrine of man’s freedom only, and away he flies to the right! Nothing will preserve him in a straight line, but the joint action of both motives; or, in other words, undivided Christianity.”

The wisdom of these remarks will probably be admitted by all reflecting persons; for there are few things which have been more injurious to the cause of religion, than the tendency so prevalent among its professors, *to lose their balance*, and to be partial, or,

as the Germans call it, “one-sided” in their views of Christianity. The Christian system is, indeed, one of wonderful comprehensiveness. It combines various, and even opposite principles; and while, by means of their united powers, it operates with unequalled efficacy on the heart of man, it confounds “the wisdom of the wise,” and brings to nought “the understanding of the prudent.”

It is scarcely true, however, that hope and fear are the “strongest motives” which can actuate the mind of man. Christianity brings another motive to bear upon us, of a still more potent character. That motive is *love*. Well might the apostle say, “The love of Christ *constraineth* me.” Well might he call on his Roman brethren, “*by the mercies of God,*” to present their bodies “a living sacrifice.” “In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by *love*.” This motive is excited with peculiar force, by a sound view of evangelical doctrine. Who will not acknowledge that it is the unspeakable gift of God—the gift of His only begotten Son—which, above all other things, bears with resistless force on the affections of the believer, and constrains his obedience, through faith, to the divine law? We love God “because he first loved us.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Now, as *fear* leads to circumspection and watchfulness, and *hope* to courage and vigour in the Christian course, so *love* in an especial manner is the main spring of the devotion of the heart to God. It de-

mands an unconditional surrender of our wills to the will of our heavenly Father, in whom all loveliness dwells, and who has blessed us with innumerable benefits, both spiritual and temporal. It binds us, by the dearest of ties, to the service of that glorious Redeemer who bore on himself the burden of our sins, and graciously underwent the bitter pains of death, that we might live for ever. And not only does this purest and most powerful of motives lead to decision in religion, but it imbues the Christian with the principle of *perseverance*. It imparts to him a perpetual movement of spirit towards the supreme object of his affections, towards the heaven in which He dwells, and towards the holiness without which no man can see Him.

The motives which are brought to bear on the heart and conduct of man, by means of the Christian system, may be illustrated by a reference to the mechanical forces. Were it proposed to raise to the top of a lofty hill, some vast and ponderous substance lying at its base, how vain for that purpose would be the unassisted efforts of the human arm! But apply the lever and the pulley, each in its own place, and according to its respective action; and the difficulty, which appeared to be insuperable, is rapidly overcome. In spite of every obstruction the mighty mass moves upwards, its course is gradual but certain, and presently the victory is won—it rests on the summit.

The human heart is a dead weight, buried in miry clay, and ever prone to sink down into the pit of corruption. And there is no native power inherent in man, by which he can deliver it from its debased con-

dition, or raise it towards those heavenly regions where all is godliness, purity, and peace. But when, through the matchless influence of Christianity, our motives, are set to work—when fear operates on the soul from one side, and hope from the other; above all, when it is raised and impelled from below by the constraining and elevating power of love—it cannot fail to move in a heavenward direction. Lightened and purified as it ascends, it is sure in the end to be victorious, and to find its resting place on “Mount Zion,” in “the city of the living God.”

A single remark only remains to be offered. The lever and the pulley, though admirably adapted to their respective purposes, will for ever remain useless unless there be a hand to employ and direct them. Even if these forces are brought to bear upon their object, by means of a well constructed machine, that machine must still be set in motion by an extraneous power. So it is with the motives which actuate the heart of man, through the medium of Christianity. They must be set to work, and moved in a right direction, by the almighty hand of a most compassionate God. He who has constructed the wondrous system of Christianity, can alone bless it, through the work of his Spirit, to the salvation of sinners. “No man can say that Jesus is Lord”—no man can savingly accept and acknowledge him as the Son of God and Redeemer of men—“but by the Holy Ghost.”

May all who read these remarks be excited to earnest prayer for that divine influence, by which alone they can be led into all truth, and made partakers of holiness here, and happiness hereafter!

SOME ACCOUNT
OF
JOHN STRATFORD,
WHO WAS EXECUTED
AFTER THE LAST ASSIZES FOR THE CITY OF NORWICH,
FOR THE CRIME OF MURDER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

To the vast multitude of persons, collected both from the city of Norwich, and from the surrounding country, who assembled not long ago to witness the public execution of JOHN STRATFORD, this tract is inscribed. Should it be the means of impressing any of them, or any others into whose hands it may fall, with a more serious sense than they have yet entertained of the corruption of the human heart, of the malignity and danger of sin, and of the infinite value of the Christian's faith, the author's effort will be abundantly rewarded.

My friend, C. F. MILLARD, the respectable chaplain of our City Jail, permits me to add, that he can fully confirm the correctness of the narrative contained in the following pages.

Earlham, 9th Month, 1st, 1829.

JOHN STRATFORD.

HAVING, through the kindness of the sheriffs of our city, been allowed to pass a private hour with JOHN STRATFORD on the morning of the sabbath day which preceded his execution, I consider it a duty to state some of the facts of which he candidly informed me, and which he seemed to have no desire to conceal from any one. In the first place, he freely confessed himself to be guilty of that dreadful crime of which he had been convicted before the tribunal of his country. A more cruel or wicked act, than that for which Stratford was about to suffer death, can, in my opinion, scarcely be imagined. To bring into a house crowded with people, a poisoned bag of flour, which, although intended for the destruction of only a single life, might probably destroy many, and which was actually the means of subjecting several persons to agonizing pain, and of suddenly transmitting one soul—unprepared, it may be,—to an awful eternity—was indeed an act of astonishing atrocity. But let the reader remark, that it was not all at once that the wretched Stratford fell into so great a depth of crime. His experience afforded a remarkable proof, (as, in

his last days, he was fully aware,) of the undeviating tendency of one sin to produce another. In the present instance the crime of murder was *occasioned* by that of adultery. Stratford, the husband of an amiable woman, and the father of a young family, had formed a criminal connexion with another man's wife, and now he sought to cover his shame by the destruction of her husband. The fatal food however was eaten by persons for whom it was not intended; and the diabolical design of this wicked man was, by an over-ruling providence, frustrated. Thus it appears that in this, as in a thousand other instances, lust and cruelty have gone hand in hand, and have combined in affording a plain proof of the hellish origin and destructive nature of *sin*.

But the most important part of the story of this unhappy man remains to be told. Stratford, for many years after he grew up to manhood, was justly considered a respectable man. He was endued with excellent sense and good natural talents, and his mind was more cultivated than is generally the case with persons of the labouring class. A whitesmith by trade, he was able, by his ingenuity, to support himself and his family with credit and comfort. He was indeed considered one of the ablest working mechanics in the city, and when the Mechanics' Institution had been formed, he became a member of it, and pursued his calling on scientific principles. Not only was Stratford diligent in obtaining an honest support for his family, but he was for many long years a good husband, and a kind considerate parent.

What then was the cause of the fatal change which took place in his conduct? That the primary cause can be found only in the corruption of fallen man, and in the temptations of the devil, that unwearied enemy of our souls, every enlightened Christian will be prepared to allow. But the question which the reader will be most anxious to see answered, I presume to be this—What was the immediate, instrumental, cause of his fall? By what strange stratagem did this enemy of our souls surprise this honest and industrious man—this good husband, and tender father—so that he became a prey to revolting vices, and in the end committed the most atrocious crime of which the law takes cognizance?

It was by conveying into his mind *the poison of infidelity*. On this subject poor Stratford was most explicit. Again and again he assured me that his falling into vicious and criminal practices, was the consequence of his having imbibed this mental poison; and the same assertion he repeated to several other persons. An infidel publication, long since notorious for its fatal influence over the human mind, became the companion of his private hours. He read it, and adopted its principles. He rejected the Holy Scriptures; looked upon their contents as a cunningly devised fable; and, to use his own expressions, gave up his “faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Thus was he left without compass or rudder, whereby to steer his course aright through the ocean of life. The revealed law of God was no longer of any avail for the direction of his conduct. No longer was he encouraged in the path of virtue, by the prospect of perfect

happiness in a future world, or deterred from the indulgence of his vicious inclinations, by any abiding apprehension of the "bitter pains of eternal death." By the rejection of that gospel which he had formerly received, he crucified unto himself afresh "the Son of God, and put him to an open shame."¹ He trod "under foot" the Redeemer of men, "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing," and did "despite unto the Spirit of grace."² And, in renouncing his Saviour, he renounced his Father and his God. Although he might probably never venture to deny the existence of a Supreme Being, yet in him was verified the saying of the apostle, "*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.*"³ The fear of Almighty God vanished from his soul before the blast of infidelity; and he soon learned to live *as if there was no God in the world.*

Behold! the sober, industrious, ingenious, Stratford, under the fatal guidance of false principles—under the pernicious tuition of a Paine and a Carlile—renounces public worship; breaks the sabbath; connects himself with gamblers; becomes the companion of sinners, faithless to an exemplary wife, an adulterer, and in the end, *a Murderer.*

I shall now turn to a somewhat more consoling part of my mournful history. During his long continuance in prison, previous to his trial, I have reason to believe that Stratford endeavoured to seek an offended God in prayer, and read his Bible with considerable diligenece. He assured a pious friend of

¹ Heb. vi, 6.² Heb. x, 29.³ 1 John ii, 23.

mine, that during this period of anxious expectation, he had formed the resolution, that, should his life be spared, he would endeavour to obtain the forgiveness of his wife, and watch over the moral and religious welfare of his children. Nevertheless, the delusive hope of an acquittal might probably obstruct that deep and settled feeling of the danger of his soul, which was alone likely to lead to a full and satisfactory repentance. When I was introduced to his cell on the day before his execution, his circumstances were awfully changed. The sentence of the law had been passed upon him. His doom was irrecoverably fixed. As he was lifting a very large Bible in order to lay it on the table, he said to the friend already alluded to, "Here I am, a man capable of any effort, (for he was in the meridian of life, and of an athletic frame,) and to-morrow before this time, I shall be cut up." Before the descent of the next day's sun, this healthy and powerful man was to be violently deprived of life, and given to the surgeons for dissection!

Death nearly and certainly approaching, is a stern yet able teacher. In the prospect of the speedy termination of his mortal career, Stratford, who was evidently of a hardy and courageous nature, seemed in no great degree to dread the destruction of his body; but on the subject of his soul, he was brought into tribulation, anxiety, and terror. The flimsy webs of infidelity all disappeared before the deep convictions of his troubled soul. When I entered the chamber which he was kindly permitted to occupy, I found him searching his large Bible with an intentness which seemed to forbid interruption, and which

plainly manifested that he heartily accepted the book and its contents as of divine authority. He described his enormous sins as a heavy burthen, which he was unable to bear, and a view was now opened to him, of the source to which they were to be traced—*the deep corruption and iniquity of his own heart.* He declared also, that he was aware of the connexion which exists between the sinfulness of man, and the agency of an invisible tempter. He had given way to the power of the devil, and now groaned under the bondage. On being asked by one of his visitors whether he had ever embraced infidel sentiments, he evinced a feeling of sorrow, disgust, and fearful apprehension. “Yes, sir,” replied he, “I have—to my disgrace, to my ruin, and perhaps to my eternal destruction.” Enormous as were his offences against the laws of God and man, it was a very remarkable fact, that nothing, under his present awful circumstances, appeared to occasion him so deep and pungent a feeling of regret and sorrow, as his having departed from the Christian’s faith, and forsaken the “fountain of living waters.” Knowing that his infidelity had been the means of his fall, he now lamented over it as the occasion of all his wretchedness.—I was told that after the chapel service, on the preceding evening, he had exhorted his fellow-prisoners whithersoever they might go, to take the Bible for their companion. It was with peculiar earnestness, that he besought his kind friend, the chaplain, to promise him that he would himself go to his cottage and destroy one of Carlile’s blasphemous publications, which lay there, concealed in a drawer. “I feel extremely

anxious," said he, "lest this dangerous work should fall into the hands of my children, and occasion the same mischievous effects on their minds, as it has produced on my own."⁴

Observing that he was anxiously turning over the leaves of his Bible, in order to discover some passage which might be peculiarly adapted to his case, I directed his attention to the fifty-first Psalm, in which David expresses the deep penitence of his soul, for a remarkably similar crime—viz. his unlawful connexion with Bathsheba, and the destruction of her husband, Uriah. Stratford, I found, had previously read the Psalm, and had been struck with the resemblance. Yet he acknowledged that his own crime was greater than that of David, because he had thus sinned, *in spite of the light of the gospel of Christ*. He repeated the words of this Psalm, after me, with great energy. Again and again did he utter the latter part of the first verse, "according unto the multitude of thy *tender* mercies, blot out my transgressions;" and very deep was his tone of seriousness when he recited the fourteenth verse, "Deliver me from *blood-guiltiness*, thou God of my salvation." The weight and awfulness of this *blood-guiltiness* became the subject of our conversation; and the ancient declaration was adverted to, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of

⁴ The noxious book was burnt in the presence of four witnesses. Should any of my readers be in possession of any such blasphemous publications, I would beseech them, as they value their own happiness and that of their families, *to lose no time in following this example*.

God made he man.”⁵ He expressed his own conviction of the justice of this principle, and spontaneously acknowledged, that the dreadful punishment which awaited him, was merited and equitable.

“I know there is but *one* hope for me,” said he, “and that is through the *blood of Christ*.” I could not but be struck by this clear and pointed declaration; and it was with the feeling of some little hope and consolation that I turned to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The once infidel Stratford was now fully sensible of the *clearness* with which the great doctrine of the atonement is described in the following verses: “Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”⁶ Whilst the poor criminal’s belief in the sacrifice made by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the sins of all men, was clear and unhesitating, he was very far from a confident application of it to his own case. Although a little hope had now arisen to illuminate his dark and gloomy prospect, he seemed, during the greater part of our interview, to be capable of scarcely any feeling but an appalling sense of his own sinfulness, and of the infinitely awful consequences with which it might, too probably, be followed. Before

⁵ Gen. ix, 6.

⁶ Isa. liii, 4—6.

we parted we were engaged together in prayer. Stratford repeated the words which were uttered on the occasion, of his own accord, and with great energy. Afterwards, after a short period of silence, and before we rose from our knees, he poured forth a spontaneous prayer of his own, and it was impossible not to be forcibly struck with the propriety of his expressions, as well as with the sincerity and humility of mind which appeared to dictate this offering.

I again passed a short time with him in the afternoon, when he grievously complained of his own insensibility and hardness of heart. A friend who was present united with me in the opinion, that he was in fact very far from being in a careless condition of mind;—and this opinion was confirmed, when we again heard him in prayer, acknowledging his great wickedness, supplicating for courage to meet the approaching extremity, and commending his soul to the unmerited mercy of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Truly might it be said, that in that solemn hour, *the knee of the blasphemer was bowed at the name of Jesus.*⁷

When my friend was again introduced to him at a later hour of the evening, he found him in a softer and more tender state. In the prayer which he then offered, he thanked God for his goodness in having permitted him so long a time for repentance, and, in a very touching manner, contrasted the advantage which he had enjoyed in this respect, with the hard lot of his “brother,” (as he called him,) whose soul

⁷ Phil. ii, 10.

he had been himself the means of transmitting so suddenly from probation to judgment, from time to eternity.

I understand that he passed a restless night, and that, on the morning of his execution, his countenance appeared worn and woe-begone. Yet he appears to have met his death with an uncommon degree of fortitude. His last fervent petitions unquestionably proved his belief in *God*—the *Father*—and the *Son*. They were, “God be merciful to me a sinner—Lord Jesus receive my spirit—Christ stretch out thine arms to save me—O God, thy will be done.”

I shall now take the liberty of offering a few general remarks, which have been suggested to my own mind by the preceding narrative.

The first, as might be expected from the leading feature of this mournful history, relates to *the danger of infidelity*. Since it has pleased our Heavenly Father, in his great condescension to our weakness and ignorance, to bestow upon us a revelation of his will, and of those truths which are essential to salvation, it would well become those who turn their backs with scorn and derision on this heavenly light, seriously to consider whether they are not committing the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; the sin which will never be forgiven, “either in this world or in the world to come.”⁸ This sin was committed by the unbelieving Jews, when they rejected the Saviour of men, and attributed his mighty and bene-

⁸ Matt. xii, 31, 32.

ficent miracles to Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils.⁹ And are not those persons, in point of principle, guilty of the *same* sin, who dare to ascribe the religion of Christ to the mere invention of man, and who scoff at those Holy Scriptures, which have God for their Author, truth without mixture of error for their contents, and salvation for their end? Since it is expressly declared that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus,¹ what well grounded hope of the forgiveness of their sins, and of eternal happiness, can those men enjoy, who despise and trample under foot that holy name, and call *the truth*, which was revealed to mankind under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, *a folly and a lie*?

Again—it ought to be remembered, that Christianity is the means appointed by the Almighty himself to make men truly virtuous in this life, and to fit them for the enjoyment of perfect purity in the life to come. “The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us *from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*”² No wonder, then, that those who reject Christ and his religion become an easy prey to the corruption of their own hearts and to the

⁹ Mark iii, 30.

¹ Acts iv, 12.

² Tit, ii, 11—14.

wiles of the devil. Deeply infected as we are by nature with the disease of *sin*, if we reject the Physician of souls, and scorn the grace which can alone effect our cure, it follows, as a natural consequence, that our disease will continue and increase, and the end of it will be *death—unutterable and eternal*.

Solomon says, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to *thine own understanding*.”³ The root of infidelity is the pride of man’s heart, which induces him to disobey this precept, and to place a reliance on his own understanding, which neither truth nor reason warrants. The *understanding*, indeed, is a faculty given to us of God, and it is our duty to make the best of it. No man who takes a just view of what our Heavenly Father requires of us—I mean a profitable use of all our talents, for the purpose of his own glory—will deny that it is every man’s duty, *in the fear of the Lord*, to improve his own mind, and to obtain as much useful knowledge as his circumstances will admit. Nevertheless, the best things are capable of being abused in the hands of corrupt and fallen man; and it often happens, that knowledge—especially a *little* knowledge (which many humble mechanics are now in the way of obtaining)—puffs up the mind, and leads people to imagine themselves to be a great deal wiser than they really are.

Then they begin to lean to their own understandings, not merely in matters of science, but in those of religion; and apply their vain reasoning to those

³ Prov. iii, 5.

mysterious doctrines which are revealed to us, not to gratify our curiosity, but to save our souls. Here they are presently out of their depth; for God is an infinite and incomprehensible Being. His judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. On the other hand, we are poor, ignorant creatures, endued with very limited capacities, and entirely incapable, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, of fathoming and understanding “the deep things of God.” Therefore we ought to be humble and seek true wisdom where alone it is to be found, *at the footstool of a throne of grace*. If we walk in the fear of God, live a life of prayer, and search the Scriptures with a humble mind, the great truths of religion, as far as relates to their *practical purposes*, will be made plain to us; and the light of heaven will lead us onwards, *in the path of duty and self-denial*, to eternal day. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that *we may do* all the words of this law.”⁴ “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”⁵ “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, *let him become a fool*, that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”⁶ “If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man *love God*, the same is known of him.”⁷ “The things of God know-

⁴ Deut. xxix, 29.

⁵ Psa. xxv, 14.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii, 18, 19.

⁷ 1 Cor. viii, 2, 3.

eth no man, but the Spirit of God.”⁸ “At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them *unto babes*: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”⁹

I confess that I am a warm and hearty friend to the education of the labouring classes, and to the dissemination amongst them of useful knowledge—*provided always*, that they are, in the first place, and above all other things, taught to fear God, to believe in Jesus Christ, and to love and reverence the Scriptures. With this foundation, the diffusion of knowledge will tend to the welfare of man, and to the glory of his Maker. *Without* this foundation, I fear it does little but make men more powerful, and therefore more dangerous.

Poor Stratford’s *unbelief* and its mournful consequences have led me to a longer train of thought than I expected. I shall now make a brief remark or two on his *belief*; for he died, as the reader must have observed, fully satisfied of *the truth* of Christianity. I have seldom seen, in any one, clearer symptoms of a thorough conviction of mind on this all-important subject. He was as one who *knew* Christianity to be true. Now, should the reader be led to enquire on what evidence this conviction was founded, I may answer, that according to my apprehension, a ray of light, mercifully imparted, enabled him to *see* himself and *see* his Saviour. A swift witness for God in his

⁸ 1 Cor. ii, 11.

⁹ Matt. xi, 25, 26.

soul, bore testimony to him, in that awful hour, of his many and terrible sins; made manifest to him the depth of his natural corruption; and aroused him to a state of alarm, lest he should perish for ever. In this low and broken state, he could perceive that between the miserable and degraded condition of fallen man, and the glorious provisions of the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is an exact *adaptation*. He now experimentally understood that man, for ever lost in himself, and "dead in trespasses and sins," stands in absolute need of an omnipotent Saviour, who should bear the burthen of his iniquities, and deliver him from the power and thralldom of the prince of darkness. Such a Saviour is proposed to us in the gospel. Stratford perceived his *suitableness*. With his mind's eye *he saw him, and believed*.

Many and various are the evidences which a gracious God has given to us, of the truth of our holy religion. The stupendous miracles of our Lord and his apostles, (for the reality of which, we are in possession of incontrovertible testimony,) and the exact fulfilment of a great variety of prophecies, combine to prove that Christianity is true and comes from God himself. I may venture to assert, that the more these evidences are examined, the more satisfactory and convincing they will be found. But since the full investigation of them is scarcely within the power of those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, it is a comfort that they have a witness for the truth *in themselves*.¹ Those who read the Scriptures

¹ 1 John v, 10.

diligently, and pray to God for instruction—those who are brought to a sense of their own corruptions, and of their need of a Saviour—will be little tempted to disbelieve the truth of Christianity. After they have found *Him* for themselves, “of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,” the language of their hearts, individually, will be like that of the apostle Paul—“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: *for it is the power of God unto salvation.*”² When the serious, though perhaps illiterate man, observes the *moral effect* which true Christianity produces in himself and others, these convictions are confirmed. When he perceives that those who once were ungodly, selfish, and sensual, and therefore *unhappy*, become so changed, as to love God above all, to love their neighbour as themselves, to conduct themselves with meekness, temperance, and charity, and consequently to enjoy even here *a happiness of which the worldling knows nothing*,—he rests fully assured that the religion from which these admirable consequences spring, can be traced to no other source, than the wisdom and goodness of *Almighty God*.

In conclusion, the reader may be induced to enquire whether, in the opinion of the writer, the repentance and faith which marked the last hours of this wretched wanderer from the path of virtue, were such as afforded a solid ground for believing *that all would be well with him, in the end?* Now I freely confess that the hope which I felt on this most interesting point, was like that of the poor criminal himself, a *trembling one*.

² Rom. i, 16.

While I remembered with sorrow, the heinous nature of his offences, I could not conceal from myself, that death was now about to cut off for ever his opportunity of *proving* to his fellow-men, the *reality of his conversion*. God, who searches the heart, knows whether this unhappy man was born again of the Spirit, and fitted, by the redeeming love of Christ, for an entrance into his kingdom. *We* cannot decide the awful question: for although we may entertain a *humble trust* that such was the fact, we are left in this instance, without the only *evidence*, by which a true conversion can be satisfactorily demonstrated in our view—I mean, the evidence of *continued good conduct, of persevering piety and virtue*.

While we rejoice and are thankful for the incomparable blessing of redemption through a crucified Redeemer, let us ever remember that Christianity is a *practical* religion. Faith in the atoning blood of Christ, although indispensable, will be of no avail for our salvation, unless it be of so vital a nature, as to produce a *real change of heart*. Then, and then only, will it bear the precious fruit of righteousness in this world, and of eternal and unspeakable happiness in the world to come.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS,
ON THE
RIGHT USE AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE,
DELIVERED
To the Mechanics of Manchester.

TRUTH SHALL TRIUMPH.

A D D R E S S .

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

In presenting myself to this large and intelligent assembly, I feel that I ought, as a stranger, to apologize for such an intrusion on your time and attention, especially since the subject on which I propose to treat, is one of so large a compass and of such high importance. Undoubtedly, it will be generally allowed that on nothing does the welfare of our species more clearly or certainly depend, than on the *right use and application of knowledge*.

The only apology, however, which I have to offer, is that I am a sincere friend to the diffusion of useful knowledge of every description; and shall be glad at all times to promote the general object pursued by this and similar institutions. The principles which I entertain on the subject, forbid my making any distinction between the different classes of society; for whatsoever may be our situation in life, it appears to me to be our plain duty to ourselves, to our neighbour, and above all to our bountiful Creator, to make as diligent a use as lies in our power, of the nobler part of man—to improve and cultivate our mental faculties.

True indeed it is, that even in our intellectual pursuits, there are dangerous temptations; especially to

pride and self-conceit—according to the declaration of the apostle Paul—a wise and learned man in his day—“knowledge puffeth up.” But I consider that this declaration peculiarly applies to slight and superficial knowledge, and that we shall find one remedy for our vanity, in the deepening and extending of our researches after truth. Those who are most profound in philosophy, and most largely instructed in useful learning, are generally distinguished by a low view of their own attainments. In confirmation of this remark, I need only remind you of Sir Isaac Newton—that prince of astronomers and mathematicians—that firm friend also to religion and virtue—whose matchless powers of mind were so remarkably accompanied with humility and modesty; these, indeed, were the crown and honour of his character.

I do not wish to enter upon any metaphysical definitions of knowledge. On the present occasion I use the word simply as denoting that information, which under the government of our gracious Creator, men are able to obtain from any source, on any subject. Knowledge, in this familiar sense of the term, admits of a division into four great branches. First, *experimental* and *philosophical*; secondly, *mathematical*; thirdly, *historical*; and fourthly—above all—*moral* and *religious*.

In the present stage of this address I shall lay aside the consideration of the fourth branch—I mean *revealed religion*—not because I am insensible to its claims, for I am convinced in my inmost soul of its *supreme* importance; but I consider it best, in the first instance, to confine my views to the preceding

branches—those which are so laudably pursued in this institution.

Experimental knowledge is that information of every kind which we obtain from our own personal observation. Every one knows that it is extremely various—that it rests on the evidence of our senses—and that it is stored in the mind by the united powers of perception, reflection, and memory. Under this class, we must include the different branches of natural philosophy; for it is now universally understood that science can be rightly founded only on the observation of the phenomena of nature. An extensive and careful examination of effects enables the philosopher to discover causes; from a multitude of particular examples he forms his general conclusions; and thus he erects a well-founded system of natural science. The philosophical knowledge which we thus obtain is more or less certain, just in proportion to the opportunities which we enjoy in any particular science, of an extensive and accurate examination of facts.

Many of the conclusions of natural philosophy—some even which are very generally admitted—amount only to probabilities. Others, in the practical point of view, may safely be regarded as certainties. But on what do all these conclusions depend? On several first principles, which the philosopher is obliged to take for granted, and which are utterly incapable of *proof*. One of these first principles is the actual existence of those external objects, about which it is the province of science to enquire. Although it is impossible to demonstrate this truth, our nature com-

pels us to admit it ; and admitted universally it certainly is ; for even a Berkeley and a Hume, whose sophistry delighted in reducing all visible things to phantoms of the mind, would have been just as eager to escape from the fallen rock or from the lion's jaw, as the most credulous of their fellow-men.

Another first principle, essential to philosophy, is that every phenomenon of nature which we can trace to a beginning, or, in other words, *every effect*, has a cause adequate to its production. This is a principle which no man can prove, but which every man is compelled to *believe*. The belief of it is wrought by the hand of God into the constitution of our nature. You will observe, therefore, my friends—and you cannot deny it—that natural philosophy itself, in the various branches of which you take so warm an interest, affords you no knowledge whatsoever, but that which is founded on *faith*.

But does the same remark apply to the second branch of knowledge ? Does it apply to those pure and perfect sciences—astronomy, for example—in which our conclusions rest, not merely on our own fallible powers of observation, but on that which precludes the possibility of mistake, mathematical demonstration ? Assuredly it does ; for no man can reason without a foundation to reason upon ; no man can calculate without a ground of calculation. The whole science of mathematics—pure and perfect as it is—rests on axioms, of which we cannot by any possibility *prove* the truth. One of these axioms is familiar to us all—that the *whole is greater than the part*. I defy the most ingenious student among you

to demonstrate this axiom either by a chain of reasoning, or by any other means. You will tell me, perhaps, that we have perpetual ocular proof of it—that it is demonstrated by the sight, and by the touch. But do a man's senses never deceive him? Can he always trust the vision of his eye, or the sensation of his finger? The fact is, that we are sure of this truth, because a settled and uniform *belief* of it, forms part of the very nature which God has given us.

It is far from my intention by these remarks to attempt to involve any of your minds in perplexing and useless doubts—in that hopeless and heartless pyrrhonism¹ which is productive only of misery and folly. I am desirous only that we may be led to take a right view of the very constitution and condition of our being. The voice of nature is, in this case, the voice of God. Well may we be humbled under a reverential feeling of the wisdom and power of our Creator, who has ordained that the first principles of all our knowledge should be received by faith in that voice—on his own supreme and irresistible authority.

Here I will mention the name of another celebrated person to whom every mechanics' institution in the kingdom is deeply indebted; I mean Lord Bacon, the father of inductive philosophy—the man who raised science with a master-hand, and placed her on her feet! The poet describes him as the “greatest,

¹ Pyrrho, an ancient Greek philosopher, who followed Alexander the Great into India, is supposed to have borrowed part of his system from the Brahmins. He is celebrated as the greatest of doubters. He considered himself sure of nothing—not even of his own existence.

wisest, *meanest* of mankind," and his history affords many lamentable proofs that great learning and unbending virtue are far from being inseparable companions. Unhappily he truckled to power at the cost of principle; and sure I am that were he now living, he would, notwithstanding all his science, be little popular among the reformers of Manchester. Yet he was a person of profound reasoning powers and of singular wisdom; firm to uphold both reason and faith, yet skilful to distinguish their respective uses. And what says Lord Bacon respecting the knowledge of philosophy? He says, "It is an assured truth and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a *farther proceeding* therein doth bring the mind back again to religion."²

Historical knowledge may be considered as comprehending all the information which we receive respecting past events or still existing circumstances, on the testimony of others. It comprehends what we learn from the traveller as well as from the historian, and indeed almost all that we know of every description, about absent persons and things. If faith may be said to lie at the foundation of natural philosophy and mathematics, this is still more obviously true of history in its several branches. It is received by testimony alone; and if testimony is of a sound description; if it is that of an honest man; or if it is con-

² *Advancement of Learning*, p. 10.

firmed by collateral evidence; or more especially, if it comes from many independent, yet agreeing witnesses, no one hesitates to believe it, and to accept such information as *knowledge*.

Take the reform bill for an example. You are all of you assured beyond a doubt that it has passed both Houses of Parliament. You are certain that this is true. You know it for a fact. But on what is your knowledge founded? On the declarations of your neighbours, or on the authority of your newspapers. Among the mighty multitudes of men and women who were poured forth, the other day, in your streets, to celebrate the passing of the bill, we may presume that there was not one who did not know the fact. Probably, also, there was not one whose knowledge of it had any other foundation than that of *simple faith in testimony*.

Having thus endeavoured to classify the knowledge which you are here pursuing, and having briefly glanced at the foundation on which it all rests, I shall now turn to the main subject of my address—*its right use and application*. It is a common saying that “knowledge is power.” He who gives up his mind to a state of darkness and ignorance, and brings scarcely any powers into use but those of his body, is no better than the brute on which he rides. Indeed he is in a far worse condition than the brute, because more responsible. These reflections must be obvious to all.

In looking, however, somewhat more particularly to this subject, I presume you will all agree with me in the sentiment, that, as the subject of knowledge is

truth, so the true purpose of it is *happiness*; and that knowledge is rightly applied, only when it promotes the comfort and *substantial welfare* of mankind.

Speculations which have no practical bearing, are by no means in fashion in the present day. Never was there a time when men were more ready to apply all things to some useful purpose; and this is especially true, as it relates to science. We are accustomed to trace the right use and application of chemistry, in the workshop of the dyer, in the stores of the apothecary, in the prescription of the physician; of anatomy, in the skill of the surgeon; of hydraulics, in the powers of the water wheel; of optics, in every kind of aid to our limited or fading vision. Above all, who that has witnessed the astonishing proofs of human ingenuity, by which this place and its vicinity are distinguished—who that has contemplated the gentle yet resistless movements of the steam engine, and the immense variety of machinery which it keeps in action—who that calls to mind the almost infinite quantity of useful material which is thus daily produced for the benefit of the world—can for a moment doubt the use of the science of mechanics?

Here, by the way, I may venture to express my conviction, that, practised as you are in the effective application of a well arranged machinery, and aware of the multitude of persons which it is the means of employing, you can be little disposed to join in the idle cry which is sometimes heard against the use of it. Machinery is one means of immensely increasing the powers of man for useful purposes; and that it is our duty in the sight of God and our fellow-creatures,

to make the most of our capacities for such purposes, no sound moralist can deny. The fact is, that this, like every other application of our natural faculties, requires the regulation of moral and religious principle—of that fear of the Lord which restrains from evil, and of that love which “worketh no ill to his neighbour.” Without this regulation, it may often be fraught with mischief; with it, it cannot fail to be both safe and desirable.

But let no one suppose that information and science can have no right application, except when they are directed to the supply of our external wants. It is not every species of knowledge, which is capable of being thus immediately applied to our comfort and convenience. But knowledge—in a yet wider range—has uses of its own, of a more refined description indeed, but nevertheless of substantial importance to the welfare and happiness of mankind. These uses may be severally contrasted with certain corresponding temptations which infest the path of learning; and in order to partake of the benefit, we must, in each case, exercise watchfulness and diligence to escape from the peril which lies on the opposite side.

1. Opposed to the danger of pride and self-conceit, the frequent consequence of superficial knowledge, is a benefit already alluded to, as arising from a thorough cultivation of mind—the *humiliation of man in the view of his own ignorance*. The uncultivated mind is left without any conception of the vast extent and variety of things which are the objects even of human enquiry. But let a man fairly give himself to the study of some one branch of knowledge; let

him go into the depth and breadth of the pursuit; and he will soon be convinced, that in this single department, he has abundant occupation for his utmost powers. He will be humbled under a feeling of the utter impossibility of his attaining to more than a small portion of the knowledge which is within the reach of *man*. But let him go farther; let him extend his enquiries on every side, with the zeal and ability of a Boyle or a Bacon, and he will soon perceive that *all* human knowledge is confined within narrow boundaries—that beyond these boundaries, there lies a hidden infinite into which it is vain for him to attempt to search—for it is known only to the Omniscient. He learns also what is the inevitable condition of human knowledge—that it must ever be founded on *belief*. Now these are lessons which have a strong tendency to deprive a man of his self-conceit, and to break down the haughtiness of his spirit; and just in proportion as they produce this effect, do they promote his real welfare. Pride is the curse of our species—the root of ambition, covetousness, wrath, malice, and cruelty. But *humility works well* for the happiness of individuals, and for the peace of society. Not all the pages of all the uninspired moralists who ever lived, can furnish a sentiment of so much weight and efficacy as that which was uttered by our Holy Redeemer: “Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

2. But a view of our own ignorance, and the humility into which it leads, by no means entail a low and unworthy estimate of the native powers of man. Permit me, therefore, to express my firm con-

viction, in the second place, that knowledge has few uses more desirable—that it can be applied to few purposes more important—than that of imbuing us with just conceptions of the nature of the *human mind*.

Let a student dive into the depths of chemistry, or climb the heights of astronomy; let him exercise himself in mathematical demonstrations; let him range the fields of natural history; or store his memory with the records of the past; and he cannot remain insensible to the inherent capacities of his own mind. The powers of perception, reflection, reason, and memory, will be unfolded and strengthened as he proceeds; and ample will be the evidence with which his own experience will furnish him, that the intelligent spirit within him is a something quite distinct from his bodily frame—endued with wondrous faculties which are all its own. And if such a conviction be the result of his own experience, that conviction will not fail to be strengthened by the view which his studies will unfold to him, of the prodigious efforts which have been made in the various departments of science and literature, by minds of a still larger capacity. A crowning evidence of this important truth, will be afforded him by the genius of a Galileo, a Milton, a Loeke, or a Newton.

It is an astonishing proof of the mental perversion to which we are all liable, and, I may add, of the danger of that *little* knowledge which puffs up the learner, that some persons, who pretend to pursue the path of science, entertain the absurd notion that *mind is matter*. Just in proportion to their professed

zeal in cultivating the rational faculty, is their senseless endeavour to degrade its character, and finally to reduce it to nothing.

I trust that the intelligent mechanics whom I am now addressing, and who are furnished with abundant proofs, in their own experience, of the native power of mind, will ever be preserved from so foolish and dangerous a notion. True indeed it is, that matter and mind are closely connected in that wondrous creature, *man*; and that, by some mysterious law of nature, they are capable of acting, with great force, one upon the other.³ But the radical and essential difference between them, is evident from the fact that they admit of no similarity of definition. Mind is that which thinks, wills, reasons, and worships. Matter is that which is solid, tangible, and extended. To talk of their being the same, is to propose a contradiction in terms. Assuredly there can be no more identity between them, than between the azure of the heavens, and the green fields, or the dusty streets, on which we tread below!

No sooner shall you succeed in imparting to some

³ The *brain* appears to be the organ through which the mind of man communicates with the material world. Hence it often happens that when the brain is injured, the connexion between the mind and external objects is suspended or perverted. The contrary, however, often takes place. I cannot suppose that any of my readers seriously entertain the notion that the brain and the mind are the same. That they are not so, is certain; for a man may lose half his brain, without any apparent loss or diminution of his intellectual faculty. Several facts of this description are stated by Dr. Abercrombie, of Edinburgh, in his admirable work on "*The Intellectual Powers.*" See p. 154.

exquisite specimen of machinery a single ray of intelligence, than I will surrender my doctrine, and allow that mind is matter. Till then, I shall depend on the conclusions of my reason, or rather on my native conviction, that they are essentially and unalterably distinct.

On the one hand, therefore, we cannot descend too low in a humble view of our dependent condition, and of the blindness which is here our necessary portion; and on the other hand, we cannot rise too high in a just contemplation of the spiritual nature of the human mind—a spark of the divine intelligence, breathed into man by his Creator, and formed after the image of his own eternity. Between the known capacities of the soul of man, and its revealed everlasting existence, there is a perfect fitness.

Let no man start, in unbelief, at the notion of the eternity to which he is destined; for, independently of revealed religion, which is its proper evidence, our known inherent powers proclaim it to be probable. Nor can we deny that this probability is confirmed by the analogy of science; for whether we reflect on the inconceivable greatness of nature, or attempt to dive into her unsearchable minuteness, we are compelled to confess that *infinity* does, in a remarkable manner, characterize the counsels, and distinguish the work, of our Almighty Creator.

That a just view of the spiritual nature of the soul, is of great importance to our welfare and happiness, is extremely obvious. The materialist, who reduces himself to the rank of a mere machine, must presently give up every notion of his own responsi-

bility—not only in reference to an eternal future, but even as it regards the present life. It is the natural tendency of his sentiments to make him the prey of his carnal propensities; and thus he becomes a source of misery both to himself, and to society at large. But who does not know that our individual happiness, as well as the order and peace of society, are promoted in a wonderful degree, by the subjection of our bodily powers to the guidance and government of the rational faculty?

3. Still more important, however, is it for the happiness of mankind, that our whole nature, both bodily and rational, should be subjected to the *moral* principle—or, in other words, should become obedient to the commands of the Deity. Certainly, then, the highest use, the first and best application of all literary and scientific pursuit, is to confirm our belief in the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe—to establish and enlarge our acquaintance with God.

It is a lamentable fact, that this noblest end of knowledge is far from being always followed. Many persons who are engaged in scientific enquiries, live in the daily forgetfulness of their Heavenly Father, and are sometimes found to doubt and even to deny his existence. This strange perversion of man's intellect, can be ultimately traced only to the corruption of his *heart*; but it appears to be *occasioned* partly by the absorbing nature of philosophical pursuits, which may easily so fill the unguarded mind, as to leave no place for the Author of all knowledge and wisdom; and partly by the habit which too much prevails among philosophers, of resting in second

causes. They trace the phenomena of nature to the laws through which nature is governed, and they accustom themselves to speak and write, and, finally, to think, of these laws, as if they were sentient and intelligent beings.

The absurdity of this mode of thought, as it relates to the creation of God, must be evident to every considerate mind. I walk into one of your factories, and enquire of the owner, or rather of the intelligent headman, what it is which regulates the moving scene, and keeps the machinery working at a uniform pace. "Oh!" says he, "it is that *governor* in yon corner of the room. You see those two balls which are always in rotation. When the rapidity of the steam engine is too great, they expand by the centrifugal force, and by partly closing a valve in the pipe of the boiler, diminish the quantity of the steam which acts on the engine. On the contrary, when the motion is too slow, the centrifugal force of the balls abates, the circle round which they move is lessened, the valve opens, and the power is again increased. Thus the whole machinery is kept moving at an even rate."

But who governs the governor? Who provided it with its balls? Who placed it in its right position? Possibly the ingenious individual with whom I am conversing.

Were I seriously to impute to this most useful yet inanimate machine, the actual government of the works, and even the settlement of the sales and purchases, you would not fail to call me a madman or a fool. Yet precisely of the same degree of mad-

ness and folly is that philosopher guilty, who goes no further than his second cause, forgets his Creator, and ascribes the orderly arrangement of the universe, and all its glorious phenomena, to the LAWS OF ATTRACTION AND MOTION.

Here I must recur to that first principle in science to which we have already alluded—a principle worked up in the constitution of our nature, and which we know to be true, though we cannot prove it—*that every effect must have an adequate cause*. When I contemplate the heavens and all their starry host; when I take into view, as a complete system, the planets, the moons which attend their course, and the sun around which they move; when I behold, in myriads of fixed stars, the centres of as many more systems of the same description; when I extend my conceptions to a countless number of these systems, moving round some common centre of unspeakable magnitude—I am compelled to acknowledge that here is a stupendous *effect*, for which only one *cause* can by any possibility account—I mean the FIAT of an intelligent and omnipotent Being.

Constrained as we are by the very structure of our minds, to rely on the uniformity of the operations of nature, and taught by long and multiplied experience, that every organized form of matter has a beginning, we cannot, as it appears to me, avoid the conclusion, that the vast machinery of the heavens once began to exist; and, being convinced of this truth we are absolutely certain that nothing could cause its existence but the power of an eternal God.

Thus do reason and philosophy persuade and constrain our consent to a record of the highest moment contained only in Scripture—"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH."

But let us take some particular part of the created universe, some single plant, some individual animal. For example, let us occupy a few minutes in considering the structure of my friend and brother there, who is sitting in front of me, and whose existence, as we all know, can be traced to a beginning. Let us examine him, body and mind. First, as to his body,—it is full of contrivances,—full of the evident results of the most profound science, and of the nicest art. How perfectly, for example, is the structure of his eye fitted for the reception of those rays of light, which are falling upon it in all directions from visible objects! How nicely are the rays refracted by its several lenses! How easily do they glide through the pupil! How comprehensive, yet how perfect, is the picture formed on its retina—a picture reversed to inspection from without, but all in upright order to the percipient within! Here, indeed, is the science of optics displayed in its perfection. Then turn to his ear. How finely does it illustrate the principles of acoustics! How nicely are its cavities fitted for the reception and increase of sound! How accurately does the drum in the centre, respond to the undulation from without!

Look at that most convenient of levers—my brother's arm; with what ease does he apply its forces! How nicely are its elbow and its shoulder adjusted for their respective purposes; and how admirably is the

whole completed by the addition of a hand! Think of the union of strength and pliancy which distinguishes his spine—an effect produced by machinery of the most elaborate description! Contemplate his joints—the hinge where a hinge is wanted—the ball and socket where his comfort demands that peculiar structure; all lubricated by ever-flowing oil; all working with a faultless accuracy! Think of his muscles, endued with that curious faculty of contraction, by which he is enabled to move his members! Think of the studied mechanical adjustment by which, without ever interrupting each other's functions, these muscles pull against each other, and keep his body even! Then turn your attention to his blood; a fluid in perpetual motion—supplied with pure air in one stage of its journey, and, in another, with the essence of his food; and conveying the elements of life, every few moments, to every part of his body; driven from the heart by one set of vessels, and restored to it by another; those vessels most artificially supplied with valves to prevent the backward motion of the fluid; while the pump in the centre is for ever at work, and makes a *hundred thousand strokes in a day*, without even growing weary! I will not now dwell particularly on the still more complicated structure of his nerves, on the chemistry of his stomach, on the *packing* of the whole machinery, on the cellular substance which fills up its cavities, on the skin which covers it, on the sightliness and manly beauty which adorns the fabric. I will rather turn to the mind, which does, indeed, complete the man—its subtle powers of thought, memory, association, ina-

gination—its passions and affections—its natural and moral capacities. Surely we must all acknowledge that our brother is a wonderful creature indeed—an effect for which it is utterly impossible to imagine any adequate cause, but the *contriving intelligence* and *irresistible power* of an all-wise Creator.

You tell me that our friend has a father—a grandfather—that he looks back on an indefinite series of progenitors. This fact only strengthens my case. Certain it is that his own structure, both of mind and body, contains numerous and unquestionable proofs of *design*. Were there is design, there must, of necessity, be a designer. The parent, as we are all perfectly aware, is not that designer. Our understanding can find no rest in the mere medium of production. We are compelled to have recourse to an unseen and superior power, and to confess that the designer is God. But if the workmanship displayed in the formation of the individual proclaims the wisdom and power of God, still more conspicuously are they manifested in a succession of generations—in the wondrous capacity bestowed on every kind of living creature, to produce its own likeness.

Were it possible that a series of successive *finite* beings should exist from eternity, (a notion which, in my opinion, disproves itself,) and, supposing it to be possible, were it probable, or even certain, that mankind have so existed—our argument from a *design* to a *designer*, would still remain untouched. It would continue to apply with resistless force to every individual of the species.

But it so happens that we are able to trace not only every individual man, but our whole ræe to an undoubted *beginning*. That beginning, which took place about six thousand years ago, is plainly recorded in Scripture, and the record is supported by the conclusions of science. You are doubtless aware how extensively of late years scientific enquiry has been directed, to the examination and classification of the surface or crust of our globe.

Geology is a favourite study in the present day, and few persons of any education are now unacquainted with the classification in question. We have the primitive rocks; the transition, the secondary, the tertiary, and the alluvial; each bearing the marks of a watery formation; and each maintaining its own order in the series, notwithstanding the frequent interruption from below, of vast protruding masses supposed to be of fiery origin. The secondary rocks in particular, composed of alternate layers of sandstone and lime-stone, are replete with fossil remains of plants and animals—the intelligible remnants of a once abundant, but now *obsolete* life.⁴

⁴ A little consideration will serve to show that these facts are in no degree at variance with the record of creation, contained in the book of Genesis. In the first verse of that book, we read that “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;*” and in the next verse, we find it declared that “*the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep.*” The question is, Was the earth in this condition when she was first created? *Most probably not.* From the account which follows of the six days’ work, (beginning with the revelation of light) we find that all creatures came forth from the hands of their Creator in a state of perfection. The tree, the beast, and man himself were not formed,

Now among all these remains, not a trace is to be found of *man*. Man therefore, beyond all reasonable question, is *comparatively* a modern creature. And not only is this true of the human race, but of the other species of animals and plants, which now enliven and adorn the world. If I am correct in my apprehension of the subject, they are all, or nearly all, NEW; belonging to an order of nature distinctly different from that which these ancient rocks display. For ever therefore must we lay aside the idle notion of an *infinite* series of *finite* creatures, producing their own likeness. Geology affords a palpable evidence that the present order of animal and vegetable life, had a commencement within some period of moderate limits.

But we have not yet stated our whole case. While the secondary rocks display to the geologist an order of created beings prior to the present, the primitive rocks—those vast masses of granite and gneiss which form the lowest and oldest tier of the crust of the earth—are wholly destitute of these curious remains of animal and vegetable life. From this fact, we

as in reproduction, by a gradual and imperceptible growth, but were endued at once with all the fulness of their vigour and beauty. From the *analogy of creation*, therefore, we may fairly infer—and the inference was drawn by biblical critics long before geology was so much studied—that the earth herself also was in the first instance created perfect. Before she became “without form and void,” and was enveloped in her shroud of “darkness,” she had probably undergone some vast revolution, or perhaps a series of revolutions. Here then there is ample scope for an order of living creatures, or even for a succession of orders, prior to that of which Moses describes the formation, and with which we are ourselves familiar.

may fairly infer that time was, and at no immeasurable distance, when there existed on the surface of our globe, *no plants or animals whatsoever*. Not only therefore is man comparatively modern; not only may all the different species with which we are now acquainted, be traced to a first origin—but all preceding orders of living and growing creatures must have had *their* commencement also, within the limits of time. Undoubtedly, therefore, the existence of the human race, together with the whole present and past system of animal and vegetable life, is an *effect* which nature and philosophy compel us to ascribe to some adequate *cause*. Every one knows that this adequate cause can be only one—THE FIAT OF OMNIPOTENT WISDOM.

From these remarks, you will easily perceive how false is the notion entertained by some persons, that geology is fraught with a sting against religion. So far from it, this delightful science has done much to confirm the Scripture record, and to complete that natural proof of a supreme intelligent Being, on which all religion hinges. Let it ever be remembered, that of all persons in the world, the Christian has the least reason to fear the influence of truth. Truth is the very element which he breathes. It is his hope, his strength, and his life. From whatsoever quarter it bursts in upon him, he hails its approach, and greets it as his firmest friend. His motto is unchanged and unchangeable.—*Magna est veritas et prævalebit*—“TRUTH SHALL TRIUMPH.”

To look through nature up to nature's God, is indeed a profitable and delightful employment. While

I would warmly encourage you to cultivate so desirable a habit, I wish again to remind you that the wisdom and power of God—displayed as they are in the outward creation—are inseparably connected with his *moral* government. Just in the degree in which we are obedient to that government—just in the degree in which our faculties, both bodily and mental, are subjected to God's holy law—will all the knowledge which we acquire be blessed to our own happiness, and to that of our fellow-men. Hence we may form some idea of the vast importance of that fourth branch of knowledge, to which allusion was made in the early part of this address, and on which I shall *now* make a few remarks—I mean *moral and religious knowledge*.

And where is *this* to be obtained? Certainly we may furnish our minds with some considerable portions of it by reading the book of nature and providence; but there is another book which must be regarded as its *depository*—a book in which all things moral and spiritual, belonging to the welfare of man, are fully unfolded. True indeed it is that natural science proclaims the power and wisdom of God; that the perceptible *tendency* of its government, makes manifest his holiness; and lastly, that the surplus of happiness bestowed on all living creatures, demonstrates his goodness. I believe it is also true that the law of God is written, in characters more or less legible, on the hearts of all men. But for a full account of his glorious attributes—for the knowledge of religion in all its beauty, and strength, and completeness—we must have recourse to the Bible—we

must meditate on the written word. There the whole moral law is delineated with a pencil of heavenly light. There man is described in his true character. Above all, "LIFE AND IMMORTALITY" are "brought to light by the gospel." "This is LIFE ETERNAL, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent!"

Do not imagine, my friends, that I am about to preach you a sermon; that is not my present business; but I consider it to be strictly within the order of my subject, to invite and encourage you to seek diligently after that knowledge, on subordination to which, depends the ultimate utility and advantage of all other mental cultivation. I beg of you therefore, not to neglect the daily perusal of the Holy Scriptures. When you return home in the evening from your day's business, and before you retire to rest, devote a little time, I beseech you, to the collecting of your families together. Read a chapter in the Bible to them, in a serious and deliberate manner; and then unite with them in worshipping that God, in whom you live and move and have your being—to that God who can alone bless your labour and your study, and preserve you in peace, virtue, and safety.

The religion of the Holy Scriptures will sweeten your sorrows, and sanctify your pleasures. It will keep not only your family circle, but *your own minds*, in right order; and while it will discountenance all vain notions and false speculations, it will enlarge and improve your faculties, for every wise and worthy purpose.

But you ask me on what moral and religious know-

ledge is founded? I answer, on that which is the basis of every other branch of knowledge—BELIEF.

I have endeavoured to make it clear to you that even philosophical and mathematical knowledge inevitably rest on certain principles which are received only by an intuitive conviction, or *natural faith*; and that historical knowledge depends solely on that peculiar kind of belief, which is produced by testimony. I might have gone further—I might have reminded you, that your circumstances preclude the greater part of you from making philosophical experiments for yourselves, and from engaging in those mathematical calculations, on which depends the certainty of astronomical science. You are compelled to take for granted the results of other men's enquiries and labours; and you do not hesitate to believe those results to be true. And why? because you rely on the *testimony* of books,—on the *testimony* of your lecturers. A few moments' thought will convince you, that almost all the knowledge you possess, of nature and philosophy, as well as of geography and history, rests on no other basis whatsoever, than *faith in testimony*.

What then can be more irrational than to refuse to receive religious knowledge—because it rests, in part, on the same foundation? The doctrines of Christianity are founded on facts; and those facts are the subject of testimony. And we are sure that the facts are true, and therefore that the doctrines resting on them are divine, because the testimony in question, is at once abundant in quantity, and sound in character. I cannot now enter on a detailed account of the his-

torical evidence, by which are proved the genuineness of the Holy Scriptures, and the reality of the events which are there recorded. But since you are accustomed to receive the testimony of your lecturers with implicit confidence, I beg of you on the present occasion to accept my own. I believe I am an honest man, and I have long been accustomed to investigate the subject. I am ready, then, to declare in your presence,—in the presence of all Manchester,—of all England,—of all Europe,—nay of the whole world,—that there are no facts whatsoever within the whole range of ancient history, of the truth of which we have more abundant and conclusive evidence, than of the DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. Indeed I know of no ancient events on record, of which the evidence is nearly so much accumulated, or nearly so strong.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, together with the miracles of Christ himself and his apostles, are our sure vouchers that the Author of nature, who can alone suspend or reverse its order, was the Author of Christianity. These miracles bore no resemblance to the false pretences of the fanatical and superstitious. They were for the most part, immediate in their operation; wrought in public; utterly incapable of being accounted for by second causes; and of so broad and conspicuous a character, that no deliberate eye-witness could be deceived respecting them. Nor were they, in point of fact, *improbable* events. Who will deny that the dark and degraded condition of mankind required an outward revelation of the divine will? Who will not allow that miracles are a suitable test

—the most suitable one which we can imagine—by which the truth of such a revelation might be established? Who does not perceive, that under such circumstances, it was creditable—nay highly *probable*—that God would permit or ordain them?

True indeed it is, that they were directly opposed to the course of nature. Otherwise they would not have been miracles—they would not have answered their purpose! But is it not equally opposed to the known order of things, that an honest man, in bearing witness to these facts, should tell a deliberate lie? Is it not yet more at variance with that order, that he should persevere in that lie, through life, and sacrifice every wordly advantage, and even life itself, to the support of it? Is it not a far greater breach of every established probability, that *twelve* men, of the same virtuous character, should *all* tell this lie—should *all* persevere in it without deviation—should *all* sacrifice their property, their peace, and their reputation—should *all* be willing to lay down their lives, in its maintenance? Is it not, lastly, an actual *moral impossibility*, that this lie, accompanied by no temporal force and no wordly advantage, but by every species of loss and affliction, should triumph over the prejudices of the Jew, and the favourite habits of the Gentile—should be accepted and believed by myriads—and should, finally, enthrone itself over the whole Roman empire?⁵

⁵ Within a short period of our Saviour's death and resurrection, many thousands of persons were converted to Christianity at Jerusalem. Soon afterwards Christian churches were settled in numerous parts of Syria, Lesser Asia, Macedonia, and Greece. The historian

But the truth of Christianity does not depend solely on those miraeulous facts to which we have now adverted. Prophecy duly fulfilled is itself a miracle, equally applicaeble to the proof of religion; and the Scriptures abound in predietions, of which history has already recorded the fulfilment. The events by which many of them have been fulfilled—for example, the spread of Christianity, and the dispersion of the Jews—are familiar to us all.

I wish I could persnade you to examine the prophecies scattered over the Old Testament, and meeting us at every point in a most unartifeial manner, respecting the Messiah who was to come. I wish I could induee you to compare them with the history of his birth, life, eharacter, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, contained in the four gospels. You would find the prophecy and the history tally with a marvellous preeision; and since the Old Testament can be *proved* to have been written long before the coming of Christ, you would find yourselves in possession of an evidenee of which no eavils could deprive you, that Christianity is God's religion. When a loek and a key are well fitted, a fair presumption arises, even though they be of a simple

Tacitus declares that in the reign of Nero (A.D. 65) "great multitudes" of Christians were living at Rome. Pliny, when writing from his government in Bithynia, to the Emperor Trajan, (A.D. 107) describes our holy religion as "*a contagion*," which had seized the lesser towns as well as the cities, had spread among persons of all classes and descriptions, and had produced the utter neglect of the ancient idolatrous worship. During the reign of Constantine (A.D. 325) Christianity became the generally adopted, and established religion of the whole Roman Empire.

character, that they were made for each other. If they are complex in their form, that presumption is considerably strengthened. But if the lock is composed of such strange and curious parts as to baffle the skill even of a Manchester mechanic,—if it is absolutely novel and peculiar, differing from every thing which was ever before seen in the world,—if no key in the universe will enter it, *except one*; and by that one it is so easily and exactly fitted, that a child may open it,—then indeed are we absolutely certain that the lock and the key were made by the same master-hand and truly belong to each other. No less curiously diversified,—no less hidden from the wisdom of man,—no less novel and peculiar,—are the prophecies contained in the Old Testament, respecting Jesus Christ. No less easy,—no less exact,—is the manner in which they are fitted by the gospel history! Who then can doubt that God was the Author of these predictions—of the events by which they were fulfilled—and of the religion with which they are both inseparably connected?

But independently of all outward testimony, and of the evidence of miracles and prophecy, Christianity proclaims its own divine origin, by its character and its effects. This is a subject on which we appeal to your native good sense, to your practical feelings, to your personal experience. Christianity is the religion of *truth*, because it is the religion of *holiness*. In vain will the student search the pages of Plato and Aristotle,—in vain will he examine the conversations of Socrates,—in vain will he dive into the disputations

of Cicero,—for a moral system so complete, so simple, and so efficacious, as that of the Bible. Where, within the whole range of uninspired ethies, shall we find any thing worthy even of a moment's comparison with that divine saying, in which the whole law of God is comprehended and concentrated? “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*”

Accustomed as many of you are, in your factories, to the printing of a thousand beautiful patterns on your cottons and your muslins, you will be at no loss to understand and appreciate a memorable saying of Lord Bacon's—that truth differs from goodness, only as the seal or dye differs from its print—for that **TRUTH PRINTS GOODNESS.**

In the goodness of Christianity,—in the purity of its law,—in its display of the holy attributes of God,—in its revelation of an awful and glorious eternity,—in its actual efficiency for the moral restoration of our species,—in the perfect fitness of that Saviour whom it unfolds, to our spiritual need as sinners in the sight of God,—we have abundant experimental proof of its truth and divine origin. Time forbids a farther discussion of the subject. Allow me then, in conclusion, to bear my deliberate and solemn testimony in the words of an apostle—and may that testimony, by whomsoever borne, satisfy all understandings, and imbue all hearts!—may it be upheld and exalted on every side!—may it surmount all opposition!—may it pervade the whole land!—may it spread from pole

to pole!—may it be as unrestrained and diffusive as the winds of heaven!—“OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST!”

My address is now concluded. I thank you for your kind and serious attention. I heartily bid you farewell; and may the blessing of the Lord Almighty rest abundantly on the mechanics of Manchester!

LETTER TO A CLERICAL FRIEND

ON

THE ACCORDANCE

OF

GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY

WITH

Natural and Revealed Religion.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letter was occasioned by the able and interesting lectures on Geology which Professor Sedgwick has lately delivered in Norwich, for the instruction of the subscribers to the Museum. Any profit which may arise from the publication of this tract, will be added to the funds of that institution.

It was not until after this letter was written, that I happened to consult that able commentator *Dathius*, the second edition of whose work on the Old Testament was published at Halle, A.D. 1791. It is a satisfaction to me to observe that my view of the first chapter of Genesis exactly agrees with his. He also informs us that Rosenmüller has adopted a similar interpretation in his Tract, called *Antiquissima Telluris Historia, &c.*

L E T T E R .

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In common with many other persons, I have derived great instruction and delight from such of Professor Sedgwick's Lectures on Geology as I have been able to attend ; and I was especially pleased with his remarks, in the latter part of his last lecture, on the absence of any disagreement between geological discovery and the testimony of Scripture. Those remarks appeared to me well calculated to extinguish every infidel taunt, and to satisfy every reasonable scruple, on this branch of the subject.

I trust, however, that a few additional observations respecting it, will not be otherwise than acceptable. The apostle Paul assures us, that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead."¹ The Christian believer, therefore, is the last person who ought to oppose a bar to the fair investigations of physical science. He knows that God has manifested himself to mankind in the book of nature. He also knows that both the character and *will* of our Heavenly

¹ Rom. i, 20.

Father are revealed to us in the book of Scripture ; and if he is at all versed in the evidences of Christianity, he cannot fail to be aware that the divine authority of this sacred volume is a necessary inference from as large a survey of facts, and as valid a process of inductive reasoning, as have ever been applied to the purposes of science. Good reason, therefore, has he for a quiet confidence, that not a page will ever be discovered in the book of nature, which truly contradicts any one of the pages of the book of revelation.

The streams of intellectual and spiritual light which flow from Him who is the Fountain of knowledge, can never really operate as contending forces. Wherever and whenever they are brought into contact, their meeting cannot fail to produce an increased illumination. Unlike material rays, they can never so interfere with each other as to produce darkness.

Apparent differences may indeed arise and may be continued for a season, as a trial to our faith ; but after a due exercise, on our parts, of diligence, humility, and patience, they will, as I believe, entirely vanish—*on one condition*. That condition is, that both the books in question be *fairly read*. If in matters of science, unauthorised speculation is to take the place of sober enquiry and induction, or even to be added to them, philosophy may soon be so distorted as to oppose religion. And on the other hand, if we are to interpret Scripture by our own peculiar habits of thought and preconceived notions, instead of availing ourselves of all the lights which a just criticism would bring to bear upon its text, we may soon be led to the conclusion, that it contradicts

certain truths which science has either proved or rendered probable.

And here I would remark, that although an undue mingling of philosophy with Scripture may soon betray us into an "heretical religion," the enlightened commentator on the Bible will not hesitate to subordinate to his use, as occasion may require it, the discoveries of physical science, as well as every other legitimate source of information. Nor, again, are the Scriptures by any means wholly inapplicable to the purposes of natural philosophy. While the allusions made by the sacred writers to the phenomena of nature are, for the most part, popular in their character, and not to be interpreted as philosophically exact, there are certain grave and deliberate passages of the Bible, even on these topics, which must be regarded by every Christian philosopher as one important element of information. Just such a passage is the first chapter of the book of Genesis.

The view which Professor Sedgwick has so kindly thrown before us, both of geology and of the zoological discoveries connected with it, appears to me to be sound and reasonable. While he has boldly denounced the fantastic theories of a succession from eternity of certain cycles of changes on the surface of our planet—of the spontaneous generation of animals—and of the transmutation of species—he has adduced substantial evidences, which, if they do not absolutely prove certain positions, must at least be regarded as rendering them highly probable.

It appears that the "crust of the earth" is composed of a number of successive formations, severally

consisting of innumerable layers, and all bearing the unquestionable marks of deposition from the waters,—that these formations (although individually often absent) are never found out of a certain order of superposition,—that in many places they have been tossed into various angles, and often into strange contortions, by the protrusion from below of unstratified rocks of igneous formation,—that the far-distant ages to which they belong are distinguished, in many of them, by the fossil remains of obsolete plants and animals—molluscæ, fishes, insects, reptiles, &c.—that these species have disappeared one after another from the face of the globe, and have finally given place to the present order of creation, of which man forms the principal feature.

Now is there any thing in the case of geology, as it is thus stated to us, opposed to the Records of Creation contained in the book of Genesis? I venture to answer, Nothing.

When we call to mind that the main object of Scripture is not to unfold the truths of natural philosophy, but to describe the moral history of man, we cannot be surprised that it passes over in silence events with which that history has no connexion. But there are two events connected with our present subject, of deep importance, even in a religious point of view, to which, as I conceive, the first chapter of Genesis chiefly relates. The first is the original creation of the universe out of nothing; the second is the creation of the present order of the earth's inhabitants, including man.

In the first verse we read, "In the beginning God

created the heaven and the earth." The non-eternity of matter is a point which natural philosophy is incapable of ascertaining. But in these emphatic words the great doctrine is, as I conceive, plainly indicated, that "in the beginning"—at some appointed period in the bosom of eternity—God gave its first existence to the universe; or, in other words, *created it out of nothing*. This is a truth of overwhelming magnitude, not to be proved by human argument, but to be received by faith. "*Through faith,*" says the apostle, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, *were not made of things which do appear.*"² When the apostle spoke of "the worlds," he evidently meant "the universe," which the Jews were accustomed to divide into "three worlds"—first, the earth; secondly, the superior world which contains the spheres, the stars, and the celestial signs; and thirdly, the highest, or spiritual world, the dwelling place of angels and spirits."³ There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, as I believe, that the word "heaven," in Gen. i, 1, (as in a multitude of other passages,) includes its glorious host—the sun, the moon, and all the heavenly bodies. It signifies the upper world or worlds, as distinguished from the world below. "Ye are blessed of

² Heb. xi, iii. εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινόμενων τὰ βλεπόμενα γεγόνεναι. *Comp.* 2 Mac. vii, 28—ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ Θεός—"God made them (the heaven and earth) from things that do not exist," i. e. "*out of nothing.*" Τὰ μὴ φαινόμενα, as Schleusner observes, is equivalent to τὰ μὴ ὄντα. "We must regard the phrase in question as equivalent to the expression in our language, 'The visible creation was formed from nothing.'"—*Moses Stuart*, in loc.

³ See *Gill* on Heb. i, 2.

the Lord," said David, "*which made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*"⁴

When we have read these few words with which Scripture commences, we may indulge ourselves in a deliberate pause, and meditate on that infinite and incomprehensible Power which called into existence all things visible and invisible, out of nothing. In the mean time, the geologist is at full liberty to pursue his investigations, and to scrutinize the various changes which the surface of the globe is supposed to have undergone, through a long course of ages, before the creation of the present order of beings. He may assume his thousands or his millions of years, as best suits him; he may make what use he pleases of the element of time; he will still occupy but a point in comparison with eternity; and he will inflict no injury whatsoever on the foundations of the Christian's faith.

After allowing ourselves due leisure for these considerations, we may advance to the second verse, "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

⁴ Psa. cxv, 15, 16. "*Principio, h. e. Cum tempus esse inciperet; quod factum est tum, cum Deus totum hoc universum crearet. Cælum hoc loco dicitur in oppositione ad terram, ideoque omnia corpora cœlestia notat.*"—*Dathius*, in loc. This interpretation of Gen. i, 1, is perfectly consistent, as I conceive, with the declaration in verse 8, that "God called the firmament (or atmosphere) heaven." He called it by the name of "heaven;" he assigned it to the upper world, "Deus hoc spatium cœlo assignavit."—*Dathius*.

This verse appears to describe that state of our planet which immediately preceded the present order of creation; all was emptiness, confusion, and darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving on the face of the waters—the sure presage of a glorious renovation.

I cannot perceive that there is any thing in the text, which precludes the opinion, that before our planet was brought into this condition, it had undergone a long succession of changes and revolutions, whether more or less gradual. The Hebrew participle rendered *and*, by no means indicates immediate or rapid succession in point of time; but is used for the simple purpose of connecting one point of a subject with the next which follows it in the order of the writer's discourse. Thus it is often rendered *but*, or *now*; sometimes it means *afterwards*,⁵ and frequently it conceals long intervals of time. We cannot be surprised that Moses was not led to expatiate on a series of changes which had no connexion with his main topic; nothing can be more natural than his passing at once from the original creation, to a description of that condition of the world which immediately preceded the present order. It was the very next particular in the subject before him.

In the mean time, that the earth, before it became a chaos, had undergone *one* revolution—that it had been visited by *one* catastrophe at least—the text itself, together with the analogy of creation, affords some obvious indications.

⁵ Num. v, 2, 3; Deut. i, 9, &c.

In the account given of the six days' work, we find that every thing came forth from the hand of the Creator in a condition of beauty and completeness. Every sentient creature, every plant of the garden, every tree of the forest, arose at once, as we have reason to believe, in all the perfection of its comeliness.

Sprung from no seed the budding wonders grow,
The pines wave freely o'er the mountain's brow;
Perfect at once the oaks dispense their shade,
At once the lily and the rose, arrayed
In all their beauty, shine—

Whatever, therefore, was the peculiar character of this world when it was first created—whether its matter was solid, liquid, or nebulous—it seems only reasonable to suppose that, like the creatures which were afterwards formed on its surface, it was orderly and beautiful; and that before it became a wild and turbulent chaos, it had been exposed to many changes, or had at least undergone one awful revolution. Accordingly the two words rendered “without form and void,” the first denoting *absolute waste and desolation*, and the second, *utter confusion*, are used in conjunction, only in two other passages of Scripture; and in both instances describe the confusion and barrenness of regions which had previously been in a condition of order, beauty, and fertility.⁶

⁶ See Isa. xxxiv, 11; Jer. iv, 23. בְּהָרָו “disorder or confusion,” occurs only in these passages and Gen. i, 1. תֵּהוֹו “emptiness,” is used more frequently. As applied to land, it indicates “total waste and barrenness;” when spoken of men or idols, it means “vanity—utter unprofitableness.” “Ex significatione verborum

The subsequent account of the work of the six days is distinguished from this memorable exordium, by particular forms of words, with which the description of each day's work is commenced and concluded. The commencing form is, "and God said," the concluding one, "And the morning and the evening were the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth day." We have first the formation, or rather (as I conceive) the renewed breaking forth of light; next the creation or regulation of the atmosphere; thirdly, the gathering of the waters into their place, the raising up of the dry land, and the creation of vegetables; fourthly, the *constituting* of the heavenly bodies to their appointed service.

Again the evening came, the morn was given,
 Especial boons devolved on earth from heaven;
 For ere that destined day, the glorious sun
 Was not, or *hid from earth his race had run*;
 No silver horn or perfect orb serene,
 No wandering gems, in heaven's dark vault were seen.
 But now, the vast arrangement fitly made,
 The morn shall rise, the eve dispense her shade,
 Months, seasons, years, proceed by natural cause,
 While heaven's bright signs obey His changeless laws,
 Who made them all; heneeforth the greater light,
 Shall blaze by day; the lesser rule the night.

It has often been observed, both by Jewish and Christian commentators, that the Hebrew text by no means necessarily imports that the heavenly bodies

תהו ובהו Moses dicit terram nostram fuisse *vastatam et destructam*; ex voluntate vero Dei eam ex aqua sub qua demersa fuisset, iterum emersisse, et quoad solem, lunam, et astra, eandem relationem accepisse quam etiamnum habet."—*Dathius*, in loc.

were actually created on the fourth day.⁷ Without any difficulty that I am aware of, the passage may be literally rendered as follows :

“And God said, Let it be, (that) lights in the firmament of heaven, (be) to divide the day from the night ; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years ; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth ; and it was so. And God appointed two great lights ; the greater light to the government of the day ; and the lesser light to the government of the night ; (he appointed) the stars also.”⁸

On the supposition that our planet had been visited by some catastrophe which enveloped her in darkness and confusion—whether that catastrophe affected her motions, or appertained only to her surface—I apprehend that her restoration to a full and regular view of the heavenly bodies, and the corresponding appointment of these bodies to their proper office—would be accurately represented by this beautiful passage.

The description of the creation of animals in the two last days seems peculiarly exact and graphical—the fishes, the fowls, the marine and land reptiles and insects, the quadrupeds, and finally man, proceeding

⁷ See *Vatablus and Gill*, in loc.

⁸ Gen. i, 14—16. The Hebrew verb עשה here employed, like the Greek ποιέω, is of very pliant signification. It signifies to make, to do, also to constitute or appoint. That it here adopts the latter sense, is indicated by the preposition ל (to) before the substantive ממשלת “government.” “עשה et in sequenti versu נתן non de creatione sunt accipienda, sed utrumque hoc loco, uti sæpe, est constituere, perficere.”—*Dathius*, in loc.

in goodly order—and doubtless in their true perfection—from the hand of the Creator. “And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.”

I conceive that throughout the first chapter of Genesis, the word “day” must be understood in its usual sense—that it cannot fairly be otherwise interpreted with a due regard to the terms in which each day’s work is described. We have six successive mornings and evenings; and then to crown the whole, the first sabbath-day. Yet the *type* of creation here described, appears to bear no inconsiderable degree of resemblance to that far more prolonged ascending scale which geology has developed to us. In this general analogy, we may perhaps observe one article of agreement between the discoveries of our science, and the records of revealed religion.

A second feature of accordance may be traced in verse 9. “And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place; and *let the dry land appear*; and it was so.” How remarkably does this verse correspond with the doctrine of the geologists, that every part of the surface of the globe, has at one time or other been submersed in the ocean; and that our islands and continents have all been *lifted up* above the waters, by volcanic action from below!

But these are by no means the most definite articles of agreement between geology and Scripture; two others remain to be noticed, which are still more to our purpose—the first is the date of the creation of man; the second is Noah’s flood.

1. Scripture assigns to man a date of no greater antiquity than about six or seven thousand years; and geology can find no traces of him at any earlier period; on the contrary, it affords many evidences that during the course of its previous changes and revolutions, the world was not prepared to be his dwelling place. The positive testimony of Scripture, on this interesting point, is confirmed, on the part of geology, by a broad emphatic negative, which no investigation has yet served to contradict.

2. The Noachian deluge, with all its circumstances, is recorded by the sacred historian with great exactness; and the truth of the event is remarkably confirmed by the corresponding traditions of all civilized nations. Now when geology unfolds to us the many ravages which have been made on the surface of the globe, by the action of water, long since the formation both of the secondary and tertiary deposits,—when it shows us the interstices evidently produced by the violence of water, between the summits of rows of hills, which are proved by the comparison of their strata to have once formed continuous banks,—when it points to enormous boulders of rock, driven to great distances from their original site,—when it leads us to beds of gravel, consisting of water-worn pebbles, and containing bones of animals belonging to the present order of creation,—when geology does all this for us,—it must at least prepare us for a willing reception of historical evidence on this important subject.

“I am of opinion,” says Cuvier, “that if there is any circumstance thoroughly established in geology,

it is that the crust of our globe has been subjected to a great and sudden revolution, the epoch of which cannot be dated much farther back than five or six thousand years; and that this revolution had buried all the countries, which were before inhabited by men and by the other animals that we now best know.”⁹

Thus it appears that there is nothing in the discoveries of this interesting science, which affords any contradiction to the records of Creation as stated by Moses; but that on the contrary there are various particulars, in which the accordance between these two sources of information on the subject, is conspicuously marked. May we not, in addition to these particulars, trace a strong general agreement between certain geological conclusions, and the declarations of Holy Writ respecting some of the attributes of God? Scripture and geology unite in supplying us with the clearest evidences that God does not forget to notice this lower world, the workmanship of his hands, but continues to superintend all the changes which mark its history. And who does not perceive that they agree in the utterance of the emphatic language—“A thousand years, in thy sight, are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night?” It is indeed a striking evidence of the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures, that the descriptions

⁹ *Theory of the Earth*, § 34. Valuable as is this testimony, it may, perhaps, be questioned whether Noah's flood, as described in Genesis, is sufficient to account for all those marks of violence to which Cuvier has here alluded; and whether some of them do not rather indicate the catastrophe which may be supposed to have preceded the present order of creation.

which they contain of God, are fully adequate to those comprehensive views which modern science has taught us to embrace respecting the universe which he has made. What, for example, can the modern geologist and astronomer say more of the Deity, than was said of him by the prophet Isaiah, 2,500 years ago? "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. Lift up your heads on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their name by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth."¹

The Professor's hearers are much indebted to him for the clear and vivid manner, in which he has dwelt on the support given by geological enquiry to the cause of *natural theology*. I wish to recapitulate a few particulars in reference to this subject.

The argument for a wise and benevolent designer from the truths of *comparative anatomy*, has been considerably enlarged by the discovery of the fossil remains of animals belonging to former orders of

¹ Isa. xl, 12—26.

creation ; and it has been greatly strengthened by the fact that between each successive condition of the surface of our globe, and each successive order of its living inhabitants, there has subsisted an exact and most significant agreement.

Again,—wild and violent as have been the forces which have changed from time to time the condition of the crust of the earth, and apparently confused and irregular as are the effects which they have produced, the geologist cannot doubt that they have been under the immediate control and management of Him who is infinite in wisdom as well as power. This truth is evidenced by the practical results, some of which are very striking.

1. Had the strata successively deposited from the waters been affected and disturbed by no counteracting force, they would of course have all assumed a horizontal position ; and most of them would have been for ever concealed from the view of man. But what has been the happy effect of volcanic action from below ? These strata are exposed one after another—even the deepest of them, in point of order, are often found to occupy the highest surface of the land. Thus they are not only subjected to the scrutiny of philosophers ; but their precious contents of slate, lime, coal, metals, &c. are afforded in rich abundance for the uses of civilized life.

2. On the comparative spaces occupied by the ocean and by the dry land, and on the arrangement of hills and valleys, depends, in connexion with the atmosphere, that mighty circulation of the waters, without which all animated nature would soon fade

and perish. Raised by evaporation, without its saline particles, from the sea, the fertilizing fluid is precipitated upon the hills; percolates through their pores; rushes forth again from innumerable fountains; speeds its course through myriads of valleys; forms the smaller streams, and the magnificent rivers; and is soon restored to its native ocean, destined for similar perpetual cycles of beneficent movement and revolution.

3. The action of both air and water on the different rocks and deposits of the earth has produced that general *detritus*, to which all the soils of the globe owe their existence; and it is remarkable that this *detritus*, in the form in which it is fit for the formation of soils, necessarily takes place at moderate elevations, or extended levels, which are in every respect suited to the convenience of man. Thus have the plains and valleys of the earth been crowned with fertility, to the unspeakable advantage of its sentient inhabitants.

All these are surely points of deep interest to the student of natural theology. They mark at once the skill and the benevolence of God; they are proofs of wise design, and of kind and beneficent providence.

But above all, geology has afforded a triumphant answer to the only plausible cavil, which the atheist can advance against the argument for an all-wise Designer, drawn from the wonders of animal and vegetable physiology.

The organization of plants and animals affords, as every one knows, innumerable instances of the most skilful collocation of parts, in order to the accom-

plishment of apparent and useful purposes. The argument thence derived for benevolent design *as against chance*, is mightily strengthened by every particular item in each combination. And in the concurrence of these innumerable contrivances for the production of a systematic whole; in the comparison which lies between them severally; in the fitness of *them all* to the physical properties of the world in which they are found;—that argument assumes a strength and eogeneity which defies all calculation.

The only specious plea of the atheist on the other side of the question is this,—that the wonderful vegetable and animal structures with which the world abounds, may have produced and reproduced their like from all eternity,—that man, for example, may have sprung from man, throughout all ages, without any beginning.

That this plea refutes itself, I cannot doubt; for it involves the absurdity of our supposing an infinite succession of beings, *in a given series*, before any one being in that series. To imagine a succession of finite beings *ab infinito*—that is, without any starting point—is to imagine, as I believe, not only a logical difficulty, but a physical impossibility. But as this reasoning is of a somewhat impalpable nature, it is a happiness that geology comes to our aid, and affords the most decisive proof that the present order of plants and animals, including the highest creature man, had a beginning at no very distant period of time; that the preceding orders, which were swept away from the earth before the present one arose, had also their beginnings; and that time was when

this globe of ours was wholly destitute both of animal and vegetable life.

Here, then, is a full demolition of the atheist's plea; and when we contemplate the wonderful contrivances of nature—the innumerable evidences of design with which it abounds—we are left without any resource but one. Our reason can find no rest whatever, but in the fiat of Omnipotence.

One more point deserves a little notice before I conclude. Some persons appear to imagine, that the existence of destructive creatures in the old world is at variance with the declaration of Scripture, that *death came by sin*. I cannot but feel surprised by such an objection. That the death of *man* came by sin—that *his* mortality is one fruit of his fall—is clearly revealed to us; but that the death of the inferior animals came by sin, is nowhere indicated in Scripture. Rather was it the punishment of fallen man, that in this respect he was reduced to the *level of the beasts that perish*.

There is indeed something frightful and distressing to the imagination in the view given to us by geologists of the vast carnivorous reptiles of the old world; but size is surely of little moment in the sight of the Creator; and there is nothing in the form or habits of these creatures which raises any greater difficulty in the way of the theologian, than the destructiveness of those extremely minute but very similar animals which have been revealed to us by the improved microscopes of the present day. That there are mysteries in creation as well as in providence, which we cannot unravel, we must freely acknow-

ledge; but, with respect to the lower animals, we may be consoled by the recollection, that the law of destruction is the law of life; and that it is really in virtue of the prevalence of death, that so incalculable an amount of enjoyment is participated by countless myriads of sentient creatures.

Let it ever be remembered, that while the moral attributes of God are only very partially made known by the works of nature, they are clearly manifested by his unalterable dictates of right and wrong,—by that witness for himself and for his righteous law, which he has placed in every man's bosom. Those who attend to the voice of the Supreme Being, which whispers in their conscience, and would lead them in the path of virtue, will need no elaborate arguments to confirm them in the truths of natural theology. By a swift and easy process of reasoning, they will be brought to the inevitable conclusion, that God exists, and that God is holy.

I am, &c. &c.

FAMILIAR SKETCH

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

FAMILIAR SKETCH.

I TRUST that the biography of this statesman-like philanthropist and Christian senator will be given to the public by some of his friends who are well informed of his history, when he was in the zenith of his powers. There can be no doubt that in the times of Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and even Burke, Wilberforce often displayed, in parliament, a flow of oratory which was fully on a level with theirs. Indeed, I have heard it asserted that, on particular occasions, his wit, volubility, and vivacity in speaking, exceeded any thing which could be heard, even in those days of the giants, within the walls of parliament.

When I first enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, he was in his fifty-seventh year; the great object of his fervent efforts of mind had long since been accomplished; he had exchanged the representation of a vast county for that of a small borough; and was no longer prominent in the *strife* of parliamentary business. His health too was feeble; and his voice, although still melodious, had lost something of its strength.

Nevertheless, even at that period, his eloquence was delightful; it fully corresponded with those living

words of the poet, which, after Wilberforce's death, were applied to him, in the house of commons, by his faithful friend and successor in the race of humanity, Thomas Fowell Buxton :

A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce ;
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
His rich materials, and regale the ear
With strains it was a luxury to hear.

I was introduced to Wilberforce in the autumn of 1816. He was staying with his family by the sea-side, at Lowestoft, in Suffolk. I well remember going over from the place of my own residence in the neighbourhood of Norwich, partly for the purpose of seeing so great a man, and partly for that of persuading him to join our party, at the time of the approaching anniversaries of the Norfolk Bible and Church Missionary Societies. I was then young ; but he bore my intrusion with the utmost kindness and good humour, and I was much delighted with the affability of his manners, as well as with the fluency and brightness of his conversation. Happily he acceded to my solicitations ; nor could I hesitate in accepting his only condition,—that I should take into my house, not only himself, but his whole family group,—consisting of his amiable lady and several of their children, two clergymen who acted in the capacity of tutors, his private secretary, servants, &c. We were, indeed, to be quite full of guests, independently of this acces-

sion ; but what house would not prove elastic in order to receive the abolisher of the slave trade ?

In point of fact, by dint of various contrivances, we managed the affair with tolerable facility. It was a large party composed of persons of several denominations, who were all anxious to promote the extension of the kingdom of their Redeemer ; and Wilberforce was the star and life of our circle.

The picture which the dead leave on the minds of their survivors is not always lively or distinct. Although we may have fondly loved them, and may hallow the memory of their good qualities, we cannot always summon their image before us, and by the power of conception, gaze on their features, and listen to their voice ; but I venture to express my conviction, that no one who has been accustomed to observe Wilberforce, will ever find the slightest difficulty in picturing him on the tablet of the mind. Who that knew him, can fail to recall the rapid movements of his somewhat diminutive form, the illuminations of his expressive countenance, and the nimble finger, with which he used to seize on every little object that happened to adorn or diversify his path ? Much less can we forget his vivacious wit—so playful, yet so harmless,—the glow of his affections,—the urbanity of his manners,—and the wondrous celerity with which he was ever wont to turn from one bright thought to another. Above all, however, his friends will never cease to remember that peculiar sunshine which he threw over a company by the influence of a mind perpetually tuned to *love* and *praise*.

I well remember that, as he walked about the house, he was generally humming the tune of a hymn or psalm, as if he could not contain his pleasurable feelings of thankfulness and devotion.

The characteristic of his intellectual constitution was rapid productiveness. His cornucopia of thought and information was rich and abundant, and I am ready to think there could be no greater luxury than that which I often enjoyed, of roaming with him in solitude over green fields and gardens, and drawing out of his treasury things new and old.

On these occasions, I was often struck with his readiness to listen as well as to speak. Wilberforce was far too much of a gentleman, and withal of much too inquisitive a nature, to engross the whole of a conversation. He seemed to be for ever in search of fresh information; and with singular tact and nicety of feeling, though without the smallest flattery, he mostly succeeded in putting his companions in good humour with themselves. The spring of his good manners, however, was to be found in Christian charity and humility. Both these graces were predominant in his character. He was deeply sensible of the "plague" of his own heart, of his unworthiness before God, of his unceasing need of an advocate with the Father. Who then can wonder that *self* was with him of small reputation, and that he was ever ready to prefer others before him in honour? Accustomed as he had long been to a most extensive acquaintance, and versed, both by reading and experience, in the history of his species, he was seldom

at a loss in discriminating character. Yet he looked on his fellow-men through a happy medium—hoping all things, believing all things, enduring all things. He was no backbiter with his tongue.

To the prevalence of charity and humility in his mind, we may ascribe his absence of bigotry, and his remarkable liberality towards Christians, whose views, in some respects, differed from his own. I well remember the broad and elevated principles which he proclaimed at the public meeting of our Bible Society. His own sentiments and dispositions were fitted no less by the sacredness of the object of that society, than by the breadth and simplicity of its constitution; and he was certainly one of its most determined and undeviating friends. Wilberforce afforded a striking evidence that the wisdom which cometh from above is “without partiality,” and this state of mind was in him the result of *prolonged* experience. The more he knew of mankind, and the deeper his draughts at the fountain of living waters, the more he became divested of prejudice. He seemed like a person who had ascended to the top of some lofty cathedral, from which mankind below, perambulating the streets, and carried along by all sorts of currents, appeared to be all of one size.

Far indeed was Wilberforce from underrating the danger of any important error in religion; but even towards those who differed from him on fundamental truths, he always maintained a charitable demeanour. Well do I remember the affectionate solicitude with which he mourned over an old acquaintance who entertained Socinian opinions. His Christian kind-

ness and his zeal for the truth were alike displayed, in his tender expostulations with his friend, as well as in the genuine sorrow which he felt on his account.

I have mentioned the quickness with which Wilberforce used to turn from one object of thought and conversation to another. In fact there was nothing more remarkable in him than his versatility. His mind was of a highly discursive character; and it was often extremely amusing to observe how, while pursuing any particular subject, he was caught by some bright idea which flashed across his path, and carried him off, (for a time at least,) in a wholly different direction. This peculiarity belonged to his genius, and was even a means of multiplying the instruction which his conversation afforded. Yet it must be confessed, that, in his mental constitution, versatility, by indulgence, had become excessive, and often subjected him to considerable inconvenience. The regular course of business was, ever and anon, thrown into some confusion, and the ground which he had lost in the delightful play of his conversational powers, could only be recovered from day to day, by a vast rapidity of execution. How often have I watched him, in the private apartment which he allotted to business, with his papers strewed about him like the sybil's leaves, *compressed* into action, by the nearly approaching departure of the post, and scribbling off a multitude of letters, all full of matter and feeling, with an unrivalled fluency both of intellect and pen!

Under the influence of so discursive a spirit, as well as of his old parliamentary habits, his distribution of

the hours of the day was somewhat inconvenient. While he dressed himself in the morning, his secretary, or some other friend, generally read to him for a considerable time; and when at last he was come down to breakfast, tasteless must have been the person who could resist the temptation of surrendering the best hours of the morning, to the pleasure of conversing with him. In the afternoon he generally slept for an hour or two,—a practice considered necessary for his delicate frame; afterwards from a late hour of the evening, until past midnight, he might truly be called the brightest of men. The midnight hour was his zenith. Like the beautiful *Cereus*, with all her petals expanded, he was then in full bloom. Here I ought to remark, that through the various stages of the day, and even in those moments when hurry and confusion seemed to press upon his steps, he never failed in his kind attentions to all around him, and in the midst of little unavoidable vexations, seemed always to preserve an even and unruffled temper.

It is delightful to reflect on the undeviating steadiness with which Wilberforce during so long a course of years, pursued his mighty object, the abolition of the slave trade. It might have been supposed that such a course would have been nearly impossible to a person of that peculiar mental constitution which I have now described. But the fact was, that the volubility of his intellect was balanced by the stability and faithfulness of his moral qualities. Where the happiness of man and the glory of God were in his view, he was for ever *recurring* to his point—and in

spite of all his episodes of thought, was an assiduous, persevering, and undaunted labourer. An example of the same kind is afforded by his admirable work on "the prevailing religious system of professed Christians," as contrasted with "real Christianity." This book is not more remarkable for its eloquence, than for its being so well digested and arranged. I believe it was produced by him during a period when ill health compelled a temporary retreat from public business; and it must certainly be allowed that there are very few works on religious subjects, which have been more remarkably blessed to the conversion and edification of men.

This volume is chiefly addressed to the wants of the more polished classes of society; and that it has answered its purpose in evangelizing the gentry of our land, to no inconsiderable extent, is generally acknowledged. It is very remarkable however, that it was also the indirect means of pouring a flood of light on the lower orders. By means of the perusal of Wilberforce's book, an individual of an almost equally productive mind, I mean Legh Richmond, was converted to serious Christianity; and this charming writer's tracts for the poor have since been circulated in vast multitudes. Thus happily connected are the links in that chain of special providence, which He holds in his hand, who has purchased the church with his blood, and rules over all things for her sake.

Here the question may perhaps arise in the mind of the reader, When and how was Wilberforce himself converted? In order to answer this question, I

will now give a leaf out of his earlier history, only premising that my information on the subject was chiefly derived from a delightful tête a tête conversation with the hero of my tale.

Wilberforce, who was the son of a wealthy merchant residing at Hull, was returned a second time to parliament for that important borough, when about twenty-four years of age. But he was not long to occupy this station,—a higher one awaited him. Immediately after the Hull election, he attended the county election at York, where, to the vast assembly collected in the area of the castle, he made a speech on a popular question of the day,—Fox's India bill. His eloquence at that early period was of a most animated character, and his voice sonorous and mellifluous. The speech produced an almost magical effect on the assembled multitude; and under a strong and apparently unanimous impulse, they cried out, "We will have that little man for *our* member!" In short, though without pretensions from family or fortune to the representation of that vast county, and in spite of the powerful influence of the other candidates, Wilberforce was elected its member by acclamation.

He was now one of the most popular of men. His fine talents, his amiability, his wit, his gaiety, *his songs*, (for he was a melodious songster,) adapted him to the highest worldly circles of the county; and of the crowded gentility of Doncaster races he was said to be the life and ornament. Yet he was a strictly moral man, and through all these glittering scenes preserved the character of *virtue*.

Happily, however, his heavenly Father, whom his pious parents had taught him to revere in early life, was preparing for Wilberforce himself better things than the blandishments of the world; and for the county of York, a member of parliament fraught with higher and holier purposes than those of aggrandisement or amusement. Not long after his election, he was travelling through France, in order to visit a sick relation at Nice in Piedmont; and the companion of his journey was his friend Isaac Milner, afterwards dean of Carlisle, a person somewhat older and more serious than himself. In the course of their journey they happened to converse about a clergyman in Yorkshire, who had been impressed with evangelical views, and was remarkably devoted to his parochial duties. *Wilberforce*. "That man carries things a great deal too far, in *my* opinion." *Milner*. "Do you think so, Wilberforce? I conceive that if you tried him by the standard of the New Testament, you would change that opinion." *Wilberforce*. "Indeed, Milner—well, I have no objection to make the experiment. I will read the New Testament with you if you like—and with pleasure!"

Important, indeed, were the results of this casual and unexpected conversation. The two friends read the whole of the New Testament together as they journeyed towards Nice: and this single perusal of part of the records of revelation was so blessed to Wilberforce, that he became a *new man*. His opinions, and after them his feelings, underwent a rapid revolution. He found himself to be a sinner, and rejoiced in the discovery of a Saviour. He renounced

the world, and devoted himself, without reserve, to the love and service of Almighty God. When he arrived at Nice, he found in the chamber of his sick relative, a copy of Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." This useful manual of religious experience he read with extreme eagerness; and it appears to have been blessed as the means of confirming and completing his change.

The news now swiftly flew into Yorkshire that their popular young member was *gone mad*. Wilberforce, with that moral courage which becomes the Christian character, followed the report in person; threw himself among the most worldly of his friends and supporters; plainly told them of his change of sentiment; and with good reason adopted (as may be presumed) the words of a yet more eminent convert,—“I am not mad, most noble Festus,—I speak the words of truth and soberness.” He now devoted himself to his parliamentary duties in the high capacity of a *Christian* senator; and so far was he from losing his influence in the county, that it constantly increased. Many years afterwards when the memorable contest took place between Lord Milton and Henry Lascelles—now the Earls of Fitzwilliam and Harewood—Wilberforce was brought in far-a-head on the poll, and a voluntary subscription of about £40,000 flowed in from all parts of the country to defray his expenses. Half of the subscription was returned as needless.

It is impossible to reflect on this story without instruction and pleasure. How divine must be the book, which through the blessing of its Almighty

Author, could bear with so irresistible a moral and spiritual force, on the intellect, the genius, and the dispositions of Wilberforce—converting the witty songster into the abolisher of the slave trade!¹ And what a merey in disguise to Wilberforce was that petty and apparently fortuitous circumstance which led him so attentively to peruse the Scriptures!

“ Oh! who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day’s incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation,—
It passed unnoticed, as the bird
Which cleaves the yielding air unheard;
And yet may prove, when understood,
The harbinger of endless good.”

There can be no doubt that many of Wilberforce’s letters will, in due time, meet the public eye. Although generally written in great haste, they were often found to be the lively representatives of a clear and highly cultivated intellect, as well as of a warm and feeling heart. I cannot resist the temptation of presenting the reader with a very few specimens; trusting that by taking this liberty, even without asking the permission of his beloved family, I shall

¹ The practical effect so often produced by the Holy Scriptures on the minds and character of those who read them, affords a triumphant argument for their divine origin. It may be supposed that this argument would apply to other works which have been the means of conversion; such as Dr. Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress*, and Wilberforce’s own book on Christianity. But this is not true, for a very plain reason; namely, that whatsoever there is of a converting nature in these and such other works, is *originally expressed* only in the Bible.

in no degree interfere with the designs of some more elaborate and comprehensive biographer.

The first from which I propose to quote, relates to the death of a female relative, whom he most tenderly loved. It is as follows:—

“ KENSINGTON GORE, (MR. STEPHENS’S,)

Jan. 10th, 1822.

MY DEAR KIND FRIEND,

Be assured that my not being a better correspondent is of necessity, not of choice; and of late, you would sooner have heard from me, but that my time has been unequal, (still more have my eyes been unequal,) to the many, almost indispensable, claims on them. Letters on the subject of which mine are naturally now full, do not harmonize with the use of an amanuensis.

Jan. 15th, Marden Park. Thus far I had proceeded when I was forced to break off; and I could not resume my pen till to-day. We yesterday returned to the house in which our dear — had passed a few days of comparative health and bodily enjoyment, and many weeks of languor and pain.

Mrs. — was naturally much affected at first; but her grand cordial is of an efficacy as unlimited in point of place, as of time and circumstance. It is the assured persuasion that our dear — is gone to a better world. I own I had wished, and with submission I trust had prayed, that it might please God to grant her a measure of joy, as well as peace in believing,—some of that holy exultation of which we so often read in the last hours of the dying people of

God ; and yet, except in some few particular instances, I know not but that the humble, but sure though trembling hope of a contrite heart, often approves itself to the judgment as a still more stable and solid ground for consolation. And it is observable, that though joy be sometimes held forth as a privilege, and even commanded as that to which as Christians we have a right, yet there are no promises made to it as an evidence. But ‘the Lord is nigh unto them that be of a contrite heart, and will save such as be of a humble spirit.’ One sees immediately the reason of this difference ; the God of grace, as of nature, does nothing in vain—if we may so speak—and joy needs no consolatory assurances, as does the humble trembling penitent. To him that exquisitely beautiful assurance is given, ‘The Lord delighteth in mercy,’—not merely kindness, but mercy ; kindness to those that deserve punishment. Oh, how often are we reminded that God is love ! My dear friend, I have not time or eye-sight now to relate to you some little anecdotes, which I am sure you and Mrs. G. would taste with a delightful relish. On the very morning of the day of her death, — desired her favourite maid-servant, (a most attached excellent creature,) to ask Dr. B., who slept in another room, to render any help he could, if there was any hope of her recovery. But if not, she added, *all is well*. And all was, and is well. And though a tender mother cannot but feel exquisitely, yet she can rejoice too ; and, blessed be God, while the tears are transient as an April shower, the joy will be as immortal as the light of heaven, as the glory of God, and the light of the

Lamb. I wish you could have heard, or that my memory could retain, a sweet prayer which our dear — poured forth a day or two before she died, after desiring all to withdraw but her mother and myself. She prayed for us, and a dear female friend, as well as for herself, that we might be enabled to bear the separation. The idea of her Saviour's intercession was peculiarly delightful to her; and she used to say she had not been accustomed to see or feel it as she then did. O my friend, what a world of glories does Christianity pour forth upon us when we, ἀφορῶντες, fix on it our steady and warm regards. And I am sure I may add, what a gloomy, what a November-evening prospect, would present itself to the mind's eye of a man like myself, advancing into the vale of years, but for this blessed flood of light and love which flows forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb. My dear friend, pray for us, that what has passed, may not have merely a transient effect, but a deep and lasting, aye, everlasting influence; that it may impress us with a disposition to be *more diligent*, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

My dear friend, I have been forced to scribble at full gallop, in order to save the post, and there may be *lapsus pennæ*, but I cannot spare either time or eye-sight to read over what I have written. Believe me to be yours and Mrs. G.'s affectionate and sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The following letter was addressed to his friend
Fowell Buxton, after certain provisions had been

made in the two houses of parliament, for the benefit of the negro population in the West Indies.

“ BROMPTON GROVE,
March 17th, 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It was quite a disappointment to me not to see you at the house to-day, and more so, because I know you are not likely to be there to-morrow. There are points on which I shall be glad to confer with you; meanwhile I am strongly urged by my feelings, to express to you the solid satisfaction with which I take a *sober estimate* of the progress which, through the goodness of providence, we have already made, and the good hopes which we may justly indulge as to the future. To find the two houses of parliament, each full of members to the brim, consulting about the interests and comforts of those who, not long ago, when you speak of bodies of beings, were scarcely rated above the level of orangoutangs, would itself be a most gratifying and encouraging spectacle; but still more the establishment of so many good regulations and right principles, by the unanimous consent of parliament, with the openly declared opinion, that political considerations alone stand in the way of their universal adoption, is almost as sure an indication of our complete success ere long, as the streaks of morning light are of the fulness of meridian day. I hope I may live to congratulate you, even in this world, on the complete success of your generous labours; at all events I humbly trust that we may rejoice for ever and triumph together in a better

world; for we, my dear friend, may, more truly than the great artist (statuary I think it was) affirm, that we are working for eternity; and our *κτῆμα εἰς αἰὶ* will be enjoyed, I trust, in common with many, many, of our poor black brethren, when all bondage and injustice, all sorrow and pain having ceased, love, and truth, and mercy, and peace, and joy, shall be our everlasting portion.

O my friend, let us strive more and more earnestly for all that is right and good here, looking forward to these glorious prospects. I little intended such a rhapsody when I began, but excuse it from the feelings towards me with which I subscribe myself to you,

A faithful and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Early in the year 1825, Wilberforce retired from parliament. The spirit in which he bid farewell to the honours, the exertions, and the *noise* of public life, may at least be guessed from the following brief, but expressive note, which I had then the pleasure of receiving from him.

"NEAR UXBRIDGE,

Feb. 8th, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If I do not deceive myself, you will be rather glad than sorry to hear that I have determined to retire from the house of commons. My physician's advice was such as, all circumstances taken into account, led me believe it to be my duty so to do,—and an event so interesting to me I do not like you to

hear from rumour or the newspaper. I scarcely need assure you, that I trust I shall not be less occupied, though I may be less *noisy* than heretofore. Were it not for the weakness of my eyes, I should be strongly tempted to pour forth the train of thoughts which is rising in my bosom; but I must check myself and say farewell, my dear friend. I hope *you and yours* are in good health, and that you are blessed also with that peace which I know you prefer to all bodily enjoyments.

May you be favoured with a long course of usefulness and comfort in this life, (if it be the will of God,) and may you at length be an abundant partaker of those pleasures which will be infinite in degree and eternal in continuance.

I am ever

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

During the eight years which intervned between his retreat from parliament, and his death, Wilberforce was ever alive to the best interests of his fellow-creatures; and continued to direct his attention with much energy to the cause of the oppressed negroes. The success which he had met with, in putting an end, by his efforts in parliament, to the accursed trade in slaves, as conducted by England, formed no excuse in his mind for indolence or inattention, respecting the subsidiary object—of no less magnitude and importance—the abolition of slavery. Retired as he was from public life, and greatly enfeebled in his health, he no longer found his place in the van of

the army, or in the heat of the battle; but both by speaking and writing he repeatedly bore his public testimony in favour of the great principles of the abolitionists; and his warm encouragements and wise counsels were always ready, the first to stimulate, the second to direct the efforts of his friends. Nevertheless, during the whole of this period, his greatest delight was in duties of a directly religious nature. He lived much in prayer, as I can testify from my own observation; he enjoyed the study of the Holy Scriptures; he rejoiced in daily communion with his God. The strength of his mind was evidently bent in a heaven-ward direction. He was working out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

Within the last few years the chastening hand of God was repeatedly laid upon him. Often was he tried with sharp attacks of sickness; his only surviving daughter, the wife of a pious clergyman, was cut off by death; and in consequence of some unexpected and perplexing circumstances, he lost a great part of his fortune. Notwithstanding these trials, however, he pursued, in simple faith, the even tenor of his way, and all was sunshine still!

My last conversation with him took place after a much longer interval than usual, and within three weeks of his death. I happened to be passing through Bath, and finding that my beloved and honoured friend was then in lodgings there, I of course made a point of calling upon him. When I arrived at the house on the South Parade which he then occupied, I found that he had been suffering severely from a bilious attack; and his lady, whose attentions to him

were most tender and unremitting, appeared to be in low spirits on his account. Still there then appeared no reason to apprehend the near approach of death.

I was introduced to an apartment upstairs, where I found the veteran Christian reclining on a sofa, with his feet wrapped in flannel; and his countenance bespeaking increased age since I had last seen him, as well as much delicacy. He received me with the warmest marks of affection, and seemed to be delighted by the unexpected arrival of an old friend. I had scarcely taken my seat beside him before I felt that constraining influence of divine love, under which, in the character of a minister of the gospel, I could not refrain from addressing him. It seemed given me to remind him of the words of the Psalmist: "Although ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;" and I freely spoke to him of the good and glorious things, which, as I believed, assuredly awaited him, in the kingdom of rest and peace. In the meantime the illuminated expression of his furrowed countenance, with his clasped and uplifted hands, were indicative of profound devotion and holy joy.

Soon afterwards he unfolded his own experience to me in a highly interesting manner. He told me that the text on which he was then most prone to dwell, and from which he was deriving peculiar comfort, was a passage in the epistle to the Philippians; "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which

passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." While his frail nature was shaking, and his mortal tabernacle seemed ready to be dissolved, this "peace of God" was his blessed and abundant portion. Wilberforce was a man of most polished and cultivated understanding; but he well knew that the jewel of divine peace transcends in value all merely intellectual riches. The human mind in its own strength (notwithstanding its vast resources) is unable even to comprehend it. It is the gift of God by his Holy Spirit, and it stays the soul in deep and hidden reliance on him from whom it comes.

The mention of this text immediately called forth one of his bright ideas, and led to a display, as in days of old, of his peculiar versatility of mind. "How admirable," said he, "are the harmony and variety of St. Paul's smaller epistles.—You might well have given an argument upon it in your little work on evidence.¹ The Epistle to the Galatians contains a noble exhibition of doctrine; that to the Colossians, is a union of doctrine and precept, showing their mutual connexion and dependence; that to the Ephesians, is *seraphic*; that to the Philippians, is *all love*."

"With regard to myself," he added, "I have nothing whatsoever to urge, but the poor publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" These words were expressed with peculiar feeling and emphasis, and have since called to my remembrance, his own definition of the word *mercy*,—"kindness to those that deserve punishment." What a lesson may we

¹ *Hints on the Portable Evidence of Christianity.*

derive from such an example! If Wilberforce, who had been labouring for these fifty years in the cause of virtue, religion, and humanity, could feel himself to be a poor criminal, with no hope of happiness, except through the *pardoning* love of God in Christ Jesus, surely we ought all to be bowed down and broken under similar feelings! The fact may awfully remind us of the apostle's question, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Before we separated, he adverted to his pecuniary loss. "I am afraid of telling you what I feel about it," said he, "lest it should appear to you like affectation, but rest assured that the event has given me no uneasiness—none whatsoever! In fact, it has only increased my happiness, for I have in consequence been spending the winter with my son—the joyful witness of his gospel labours." In short it was evident that the world was under his feet, that grace was triumphant, and that the Saviour whom he loved was reigning over all, for the benefit of this faithful believing servant. The covenant of God with him was ordered *in all things*, and sure. Thus are we taught again and again that this is the victory which overcometh the world, *even our faith*. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"²

His feelings having been a good deal excited, and his weakness evidently great, I now perceived that it was time for us to part. I grasped his hand, and bid him farewell; in the humble and reverent hope

² 1 John v, 4, 5.

that, through unutterable mercy, we shall meet again where pain and parting, sorrow, sin, and death, are no more.

The visit to Wilberforce, which I have now described, took place on the 11th of the 7th month, (July.) He died on the 29th. The affecting event was communicated to me in the following letter from his second son.

“44, CADOGAN PLACE,
SLOANE STREET, LONDON,
July 30th, 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am told that one of the last letters which my dearest father received was from you. I have now to tell you that he has passed into that better state, where the consolations of earthly friendship are no longer needed, and the cares of earthly business no more felt. He had been staying here some few days to consult Dr. Chambers, and on Saturday last became much worse. But when his mind was awake, it was as of old, *humble, resigned, tranquil, heavenly*. He was in a sort of fainting fit much of Sunday, and yesterday he was gathered to his eternal inheritance. It is matter of great thankfulness that he should have passed away without any pain. My dear mother is wonderfully comforted.

I am your very sincere friend,

ROBT. ISAAC WILBERFORCE.”

On the day before his death, Wilberforce expressed his unfeigned delight in the prospect, now so near at

hand, of the liberation of our colonial slaves. "Oh," said he, "that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the abolition of slavery!"

In compliance with the particular wish of the Lord Chancellor, and at the request of numerous peers and commoners, the remains of this venerable man,—this true and enlightened patriot,—were buried in Westminster Abbey. The funeral was in itself very much devoid of pomp. But the business of the national councils was suspended on the occasion, and he was followed to the grave by a very large proportion of the members of both houses of parliament,—many of them persons of the highest distinction, and of *all parties in the state*. The pall was supported by eight gentlemen and noblemen; among whom were the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the house of commons, and the Duke of Gloucester, and his body was committed to the dust, close by the tombs of Pitt, Fox, and Canning.

What can be more striking than the contrast between the unrivalled honours thus poured out upon his memory after death, and his own humble and contrite state of mind, during the last stage of his mortal pilgrimage? Should a monument be erected over his grave, I hope it will be a simple one. The marble can bear no better ornament than the untitled name of William Wilberforce,—a name which is already engraven on the hearts of millions.

SABBATICAL VERSES.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following essays in verse have been composed during a period of much affliction, and have helped to soothe some of my solitary hours of sorrow. In the prospect of leaving my native land, in order to pay a visit, in the capacity of a minister of the gospel, to some parts of America, I venture to present them to the Christian public of this country, as a farewell token of affectionate respect and regard.

London, 5th Month, 24th, 1837.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST

IN

The First Creation.

“By whom also he made the worlds:” HEB. i, 2.

BLEST be thy name, thou uncreated Word,
With God before all worlds, thyself the Lord,
By whom all nature into being sprang,
While heaven applauded and the angels sang.
Bright stars of morning hailed thee in their lays,
The sons of God proclaimed their Master's praise,
Themselves once fashioned by thy plastic hand,
To thee they live, they move at thy command.

Well might they joy, when the celestial dove
O'er shoreless oceans waved her wing of love,
Gently incumbent, and through realms of night
Ancient and wild, was poured the new-born light.
Bright efflux from the unfathomed source of day,
And of the eternal co-eternal ray,
Thine was the glory of that hallowed hour;
From God, from thee, its radiance; thine the power
That bade the seas recede, the land arise,
Opened the fountains, spread the watery skies,
Gave to the air its substance and extent,
Built and adorned the azure firmament.

Another day is come ; earth claims her bowers,
Her vest of verdure, and her wreath of flowers.
Sprung from no seed the budding wonders grow,
The pines wave freely o'er the mountain's brow,
Perfect at once the oaks dispense their shade,
At once the lily and the rose, array'd
In all their beauty, shine; the primrose pale,
Jasmine and hyacinth, perfume the vale ;
Cassia and myrrh their wasted odours pour,
The purpling vines each rifted rock explore ;
A thousand fruits with early blush appear,
The promise of that bright primeval year.
Their seeds are in them ; sweets, untasted now,
To men in every age shall bend the bough.

Again the evening came, the morn was given,
Especial boons devolved on earth from heaven ;
For ere that destined day, the glorious sun
Was not, or hid from earth his course had run ;
No silver horn or perfect orb serene,
No wandering gems, in heaven's dark vault were seen :
But now, the vast arrangement fitly made,
The morn shall rise, the eve bestow her shade ;
Months, seasons, years, proceed by natural cause,
While heaven's bright signs obey His changeless laws,
Who made them all ; henceforth the greater light
Shall blaze by day ; the lesser rule the night.
Thus didst thou build and thus adorn a home
For sentient creatures, countless tribes that roam
O'er earth's wide surface, all alike by thee
Endued with life's mysterious energy,
And conscious joy.—Some animate the seas,
Now dive below, now leap to inhale the breeze,

Armed with their silvery scales, retreat, advance,
Crop the soft weed, and urge the mazy dance ;
While the smooth whales, disporting, lash the deep,
And bid her fountains boil, or calmly sleep
Like islands on her breast.—Some poised in air
Flap the light wing and distant flight prepare,
Or mount aloft, and to the sun unfold
Their feathered pride of purple, green, and gold ;
Or less adorned for sight, a social throng,
Charm the glad ear, and fill the groves with song.

Some track a humbler path, and move unseen
In earth's dark soils, or hid in thickets green,
Their fleshy ringlets formed for easy play,
Contracting and dilating, wind their way.
With arching neck, fork'd tongue, and eye of flame,
Some slowly glide, or coil their circling frame.
Some frolic wild, and bound along the plain,
Or leap the rocks their wintry peak to gain ;
Or on high bough the grateful kernel find,
Impetuous spring, and chatter to the wind,
Or couch and ruminat on all the glade,
Or haunt the den, and penetrate the shade :
Or to the pine-top lift a graceful form,
Or rove the wilderness, and breathe the storm.

Slow moves behemoth o'er the trembling ground ;
Of massive bars his framework, girt around
With sinewy folds prodigious ; easy toil !
With share of ivory he ploughs the soil,
Uproots his bulbous feast, intent to ply
The lithe proboscis,—while his lucid eye
Beams with intelligence. The age must come
When Asia's potentates and conquering Rome,

Shall yoke his sons to the triumphal ear,
Train them to arts of peace, to strift of war ;
O'er the broad living flank, uprear the tower,
And safely from its height their javelins shower,
Untutored now,—ere known the haunts of men,—
He wanders wild o'er forest, glade, and glen ;
With draughts delicious cools his burning blood,
And weens to dry the springs of Jordan's sacred flood.

The hand that formed this wondrous living scene
Must guide it still—no other hand between—
Must prompt the purpose, and direct the will,
Inspire unseen the philosophic skill,
Conduct the instinctive arts, impel, control,
Move in each moving part, and speed the whole.

Led by the gentle impulse of the breast,
Untaught, untrained, each warbler builds her nest,
At the right season, when the spring is green,
Of right materials, though by her unseen
Till now she needs them ; of the ancient form
By which her sires were sheltered from the storm.
What reason prompts the swallow's arduous flight
Ere winter's frown prolongs the dreary night,
Bids her to southern shores in haste repair,
Directs her passage through the boundless air ?
What sense forewarns ere warmer climates burn,
And marks the moment for her safe return ?

Profound geometer ! who taught the bee
To mimic science, and to rival thee ;
With even hexagons to fill the plane,
Thus ample room with utmost strength to gain ;
Nor fill the plane alone ; through all the mass
No waste of substance, and no loss of space ;

Each cell descending in the angle true
That great Maclaurin by his fluxions knew?
What proud inventive faculties impart,
From age to age unchanged, the spider's art?
Around her home the magic circles run,
Each thread of thousands wonderfully spun.
The viewless gossamer man's skill exceeds,
No teaching asks, no rule of science needs;
Her nets ethereal every bush adorn
Dressed in the peerless dewdrops of the morn.
What laws of order human wisdom vaunts
Can match the civic polity of ants?
Commodious cities, and well guarded lands,
Of willing labourers th' united bands;
The equal tending of ten thousand young,
The silent touch for man's vociferous tongue.

The appointed customs of each busy kind
Involve the working of thy master mind.
Fountain of science, spring of all that's wise,
Thy moving power their energy supplies,
The power that formed each creature's living frame
With fitness nice to some peculiar aim.
One general type the glorious scheme pervades,
While special forms, and ever varying grades,
Connect, adorn, diversify the plan,
From the low reptile, up to complex man.
Wisdom of God—high Partner of his throne,
The Father's pleasure—with the Father one,
From thee of beauty flow the varied streams,
With marks of thee exuberant nature teems,
Thy influence spreads above, around, below,
The best philosophy is thee to know.

As shapes and letters graven on the seal,
Adorn its substance, and its end reveal,
The melting wax a well known sign receives,
The eye beholds it and the mind believes ;
God's image thou and character express,
In thee he wills to quicken, form, and bless ;
To worlds of life the sacred type is given,
And nature's glory corresponds with heaven.

But chiefly *man*, now risen from the dust,
Of graceful carriage and proportions just,
Fresh as the morn, and as the day-star bright,
His visage beaming with celestial light,
Of lofty look and awful form erect,
Destined to guide, to govern, to protect,
With lamp of reason, furnished from above,
And filled with wisdom, holiness, and love,
His frame the dwelling of a soul that soars
To heaven's high courts, and communes and adores—
Man who alone the life eternal shares,
Reflects thy beauty, and God's likeness bears.

Alas, how soon, when Satan wins his way,
That form shall fade,—that likeness shall decay !
Now all is perfect, all in thee is blest,
And speeds its gentle course, the day of rest.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST

IN

The New Creation.

“ If any man be in Christ, it is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new:” 2 COR. v, 17.

CLAD with no verdure, by no waters fed,
Behold on every side a desert spread!
No fruit, no food for man, the sands produce,
Nor plant is there but of a poisonous juice,
Or armed with thorns; beneath each stunted brake,
Or fatal scorpion, or envenomed snake,
Unheeded lurks; all life is deadly there,
And the wild waste is pregnant with despair.

Woe to the traveller who dares assay
To happier climes that drear and trackless way;
His courage lost, exhausted all his stores,—
The farthest east or west his eye explores,
Unknown, impassable, the plains extend,
Hope withers, wheresoc'er his footsteps bend;
When suddenly, beneath the lurid beam,
Far, far ahead, the welcome waters gleam;
For so he weens; intent his thirst to slake,
And bathe with rapture in the lovely lake,

He presses onward with unnatural strength,
 And paces swift the desert's weary length;
 But flits the soft deception from his view;
 The burning, barren, sands alone are true;
 Struck to the heart, he breathes a hopeless sigh,
 Then nerveless sinks, to suffer and to die.

Such change the curse had wrought; but who shall
 scan

That deadlier wilderness, the heart of man?
 Barren of all that's good,—of strife and sin
 Productive always, spreads the waste within.
 There Satan lurks in various guise conceal'd,
 The soul his victim, and the world his field;
 Instils his poisons with consummate skill,
 Perverts the judgment and depraves the will,
 Inspires disease with dank, pestiferous, breath,
 Distorts the passions, then consigns to death.
 His was the suasion, his the murderous lie,
 'Partake the fruit,—thou shalt not surely die.'
 The dark deceit assumed fair reason's show,
 Presage to millions of eternal woe.
 Hence too our evils here; the hope forlorn
 That sinks into despair; the festering thorn
 That rankles in the breast; the bitter tear
 Of helpless poverty, and pallid fear,
 Of death to come, and pain that mocks control,
 Anguish of body, agony of soul,
 And brother's hand imbrued in kindred blood,
 And scowling want, and war's ensanguined flood,
 Sickness and plague in all their proteus forms,
 And ocean's rage, and faction's ruder storms;

Lust, malice, fraud, and envy's evil eye,
Rapine for gold, and eurse of slavery.

Though pomp and pleasure many a bait prepare,
And fame her radianee shed, and beauty glare,
And worldly wisdom with proverbial pride,
And quaint conceits, her native darkness hide,
And eurious learning spread her ample store,
And philosophie ken the skies explore,
And poesy in waves of magie roll,
And patriot eloquenee inflame the soul,
And bravery assert the laurel crown,
And love impassioned eall mankind her own,—
All without grace, but imitate the gleam
Of the false lake,—they are not what they seem ;
The flippant vision sparkles in the sun,
Then fades in death, and leaves the world undone.

Yes, that fair form “now risen from the dust,
Of graeful earriage and proportions just,”
That “visage beaming with eelestial light,”
“Fresh as the morn and as the day-star bright,”
Beneath the eurse, must soon to dust return,
The senseless tenant of some silent urn.
The worm must feed upon that glowing cheek,
That tongue of eloquenee must eease to speak,
That eye forget its beam,—no art ean save
Those manly features from their destined grave.
But the dark future in her hidden womb,
Holds deeper seerets,—far below the tomb
A prison frowns ; a mansion of despair,
The deathless worm, the flames unqueneh'd are there !
Severed from God, the soul without resouree,
Helpless and hopeless, speeds her downward course ;

And while the mortal wreck unheeding lies,
 Hers is the sterner death that never dies.
 Rise then, Immanuel, victor o'er the strife,
 Proclaim thine own free boon of light and life!
 By thee the streams of reconciling love
 For ever flowing from the fount above,
 Ordered of God, obedient to his plan
 Of perfect holiness, descend to man.

Hail, word of promise, graciously bestowed
 Ere man was driven from his blest abode,
 Promise of joy—'The woman's seed shall tread,
 Though bruised his heel, upon the serpent's head;
 Shall level with the dust his rebel brow,
 Then bid him sink to boundless gulphs below;
 Shall raise our fallen race to loftier height
 Than ere was compassed by thought's eagle flight,
 To happiness and virtue freely given,
 To God, to glory, to the throne of heaven.'

Lo, blood is stealing o'er the grassy plain:—
 Pride of the flock, by faithful Abel slain;
 Slain in obedience to His high behest,
 Who gives, then claims, the firstling and the best.
 Strange sacrifice, by reason unexplained!
 Why should those virtuous hands with gore be stain'd?
 No flesh permitted yet to human need,—
 The flame alone must on the victim feed;
 Flame from the skies descending, radiant sign
 Of heaven's accord and pardoning love divine.
 By faith, not reason, was the offering made;
 And now that lambent light dispels the shade;
 The fire celestial bursting into view,
 Consumes the type, and proves the promise true.

Foreknown of God, before all worlds decreed,
In time to come, for all mankind must bleed,
A sinless Lamb—the woman's holy seed.

Meanwhile the promise with the age extends,
Each rolling period some new feature lends,
'To mark its character with various line,
Unfold its beauty, and its shape define ;
Just as some germ in nature's fruitful field,
Pregnant with forms well folded, well conceal'd,
Shoots and increases with revolving days,
And part by part, the destined plant displays,
Uplifts a stem obedient to the shower,
Then pours a hundred leaves, then blooms a flower.

From Abraham the promised Seed shall spring,
From Judah's tribe the world accept her king,
From Jesse's root and David's royal line,
Shall rise, with gentle force, that Branch divine.
By heaven's own power a virgin shall conceive,
And Bethlehem's shade the newborn Prince receive ;
Not till yon temple on Moriah's height,
Have sunk in flames,—a second sprung to sight ;
Nor till the sceptre of proud Judah's sway
With all his laws, be trembling in decay ;
The seventieth week that hallowed birth shall see,
From Israel's hope renewed, and Persia's kind decree.

Like yon pale star that ushers in the day,
A royal herald shall prepare his way,
Proclaim his coming with the Spirit's voice,
And bid the wilderness in hope rejoice.
Expected, then, upon the earth shall stand
The saints' Redeemer, and with mercy's hand—

Like Moses—yet with power to no man given,
Shall save and regulate the flock of heaven ;
Shall bid stout hearts to noble deeds be strung,
And gently lead the weak, and fold the young
To his warm breast, that in those halcyon days
Babes may rejoice, and sucklings sing his praise.
Then like the hart, the lame with joy shall bound,
The deaf be gladdened with the gospel sound,
The blind with opened eye behold his face,
Gaze on his glory, and admire his grace,
While o'er the desert living waters roll,
To quench the anxious thirsting of the soul.
He, girt with faithfulness, and clad with zeal,
Shall truth celestial to the meek reveal,
Shall teach the simple and sincere to climb,
To Zion's gate by virtue's path sublime—
Himself their pattern, comrade, captain, friend—
And crown with joy and praise their journey's end.

The mighty God by nature and by name,
The Lord our righteousness—the true I am—
He yet shall suffer in our mortal frame !
From the dry soil the humble plant must grow,
No wreath of comeliness adorn his brow ;
Where shall our glad report attract belief ?
Lowly his form,—his visage marred with grief ;
Rejected, scorned, whom no man dares to know,—
Sorrow his friend,—his fellowship with woe !
For us, for us, he bears the chastening rod,
His are the stripes, and ours is peace with God ;
The silent sufferer to the slaughter led,—
Our sins inflict his wounds, our crime is on his head !

Behold, the slain one shall prolong his day,
The worm and Hades must resign their prey,—
Like ocean's vista with the moon-beam bright,
Blazes his "path of life" with heavenly light.
He lives! he reigns! heaven's gates receive their king,
"The Captor eaptive led," applauding angels sing.

While propheey, unfolding age by age,
And ever germinant, adorned the page,
God's ritual law, with peneil nicely true,
The curious shadows of the future drew.
Was it to signify the past alone,
The pasehal vietim knew no broken bone.
Food of all Israel, and stained with gore
The lintel and the posts of every door?
Of old where'er that saered blood was sprent,
No plague could taint, no deadly shaft be sent;
Now, for the soul that bears a lovelier stain,
Death drops his sting, and Satan's darts are vain.

Once every year a saered day was kept,
When Israel for her sins repentant wept,
And purified afresh, in linen vest,
Humble but elean, her solemn priest was dress'd.
Doffed were his gorgeous robes and jewell'd crown,
The bullock now must for himself atone,
The goat for all the people; calm he stands
Within the veil, the eenser in his hands;
And while the perfume pours a balmy flood,
Bedews, seven times, the merey-seat with blood.
But now the alternate goat with fillets bound,
To meet his eoming treads the holy ground,
Allotted to escape, and with him bear
The sins of Israel into desert air,

Sins, which the priest before the Lord must spread,
 Then lay the burden on his spotless head.
 Away he springs, unconscious and alone,
 And hides his mystic load in lands unknown.
 The guilt he carries can no more return,—
 Meanwhile, without the gate, the slaughtered victims
 burn !

The priest in humble garb, and holiest place,
 Conversing with Jehovah face to face,—
 The dying beasts that pour the crimson tide,—
 The scape-goat o'er the desert wandering wide,—
 Pictures of truth with various art combined,
 Their end and substance in *one* Saviour, find.

Saviour, incarnate, glorified, enthroned,
 Whose precious blood for all our race atoned,
 Well versed in death, familiar with the grave—
 A man to sympathise, and God to save—
 Thy prospect spreads interminably bright,
 Thy boundless retrospect is filled with light ;
 Unnumbered, infinite, have sped thy years,
 Ere seraphs sang, or rolled the starry spheres ;
 Centre in thee, past, present, and to come,
 The Father's bosom thy eternal home.

Time saw its fulness, and the Saviour came,
 That messenger divine of hidden name,
 With whom, of yore, was Jacob's covenant made,
 Whom Abraham saw, and trusted, and obeyed ;
 Living Redeemer of the orphan'd sire,
 Who spake to Moscs from the bush on fire,
 Before whose feet the awe-struck Joshua bowed,
 Who led all Israel in the flame and cloud ;

Whose praise the seraphs chaunted as they flew
When burst his glory on Isaiah's view,
Ambassador at once, and Lord of heaven,—
When Mary's child was born, the Son of God was given.
Now is the vast prophetic knot untied,
The ancient vision cleared and verified ;
The types and promises to facts apply,
Each figure finds its own reality,—
All meet in Jesus, all in him combine,
Ten thousand rays in one grand focus join !

Death to the sinful soul the law demands,
And calls for vengeance at God's holy hands,
But grace prevails and free remission gives,
The Saviour died, the ransomed sinner lives.
No human learning could that problem solve,
Justice and peace around the cross revolve ;
Faith winged with prayer draws mercy from above,
And sternest truth amalgamates with love.
In every age by this appointed way,
Some souls, redeemed, have sprung to endless day,
Their faith proportioned to the light bestowed,
Their end was glory, for they lived to God.
But who shall speak the solemn soft repose,
Which on his Saviour's breast the Christian knows ?
On Christ the burden of his sins is laid,
On Christ, in reverent trust, his heart is stayed ;
Contrite yet firm, the alarm of war recedes,
The Saviour's righteousness alone he pleads ;
That plea victorious over Satan's wiles,
His frown he fears not, for Immanuel smiles ;
Opened for him is Zion's sacred flood,
His conscience rests—his soul is cleansed with blood ;

Let troubles multiply, let pains increase,—
His inward treasure is the pearl of peace.

But mark the unbending rule,—no peace within,
While man's frail bosom is the sport of sin ;
By passion tost, as miry billows roar,
And spread pollution, when they lash the shore.
The deep, deceitful, restless, heart of man,
Must yield obedience to the gospel plan,
Renounce its pride, commence a nobler strife,
Rise from the dust, and struggle into life.

Accepted be the boon of light divine
That our redeeming God has given to shine
In every human breast, else wholly dark ;
Though often weak, yet pure the vital spark ;
Call it not "conscience,"—conscience is the eye
That spark illumines, or the soul must die ;
The moral truth attracts the mental sight,
The medium that reveals its form is *light*.
And God is *light*,—from God the source of day,
Through Him who died and lives, the Truth, the Way,
Changeless from age to age, proceeds the ray,
The same in Britain, India, Athens, Rome,
Man's heart and conscience its appointed home.
Thus Gentiles who no heavenly code possessed
On stony tablet, to the law confessed
As read within, though faintly and in part,
And showed its precepts graven on the heart.
Like men once dead, but wakened from the tomb,
Some gifted spirits burst the general gloom,
In ealm retreats, by classic reasoners trod,
Gave form to virtue, and discoursed of God.

Yet Grecia's sages but the twilight knew,
No noonday radiance blazed before their view,
Around e'en Plato's brows a veil was hung,
Error with truth distilling from his tongue.
Then hail God's holy page, the gospel hail !
Unfurl the canvass, spread the swelling sail ;
Fly forth ye words of truth from shore to shore,
For heaven's own Sun is risen to set no more !

Gems beyond price the folded book conceals,
And only Jesus can unloose its seals.
Lion of Judah, Prince of all the tribes
That worship God, as heaven itself prescribes,
Pour thy bright beams, thy Spirit deign to give,
And teach mankind to understand and live ;
Anoint the slumbering eye, the stubborn ear,
Melt the proud heart, inspire the godly fear,
Convince of sin, and then disclose the tide
Of blood and water, from thy pierced side,
That flows for ever ; cleanse thy church within ;
Sprinkle the nations from their guilt and sin.
Thou art the one baptizer ; thine the wave
In which alone the leprous soul can lave ;
As Naaman erst in Jordan's sacred stream
Seven times immersed, his cure might fitly deem
A new existence, and himself a child,
Now soft and pure,—once hardened and defiled.
What though an entrance on the joys of heaven
Through the one sacrifice be freely given
To all believers, none indeed believe
But the regenerate,—none but they receive

The guerdon kept by Jesus for his own.
 Who bear the cross on earth, in heaven shall wear the
 crown.

Bless'd Spirit, like the wind that viewless blows,
 Whence coming, whither fleeing, no man knows,
 Yet armed of heaven to break with giant stroke
 The towering cedar and the spreading oak ;
 Or mildly breathing as a summer breeze,
 Felt to refresh, perceptible to please—
 Spirit of truth—move onward as the wind,
 Break, humble, cleanse, and vivify mankind.

Beneath that sovereign touch, that vital breath,
 The soul emerges from the realms of death,
 Escapes her prison,—flings her chain away,
 Claims a new life, and rises into day.
 Have ye not marked the verdant pastures gleam
 In diamonds dressed beneath the orient beam ?
 Sparkles on every grassy blade a gem,
 On every blossom rests a diadem ;
 So bright, so lovely, is the child of grace,
 In youth, just entered on the Christian race ;
 Ardent but tender, pliable yet true,
 Beaming with love, and fresh with heavenly dew.
 What though, as years roll on, and shift the scene,
 A calmer, cooler, mood may supervene,
 Yet spreads the root in the deep soil below,
 And riper fruits on firmer branches grow ;
 Well tempered charity, substantial peace,
 Wisdom and fortitude, with years increase ;
 Patience to suffer, meekness to forbear,
 With nice discernment of each hidden snare ;

The watchful eye; the ever deepening sense
Of man's defect, and God's omnipotence;
The hastened heart, oft prostrate in the dust,
The steadfast walking, the unbending trust,
And hope well settled on the joys above,
The calm reflection of a Saviour's love,—
To perfect day, the just man's path shall shine,
Thou Holy Comforter, its light is THINE.

Now breathe the spices, now the zephyr blows,
Spreads the green carpet, God's broad river flows,
Bursts forth the myrtle, shoots the box, the pine,
Seents all the grove the twisted eglantine,
The jasmine pours her stars, with roses crowned
Sweet Sharon smiles, where once the desert frowned.
No more impends the death-forboding gloom,
While sweeps o'er boundless sands the hot simoom,
Nor wounds the thorn, nor scorpion darts her sting
Pregnant with death; but round their odours fling,
Fresh with soft showers, the blossoms of the spring.

Hark, matchless melody! the bridegroom's voice
Steals o'er the gale and bids his spouse rejoice;
"Awake, my fair one, winter reigns no more,
The storms are past, the hurricane is o'er,
Rise from thy couch and tread the dewy lawn,
The turtle's note salutes the opening dawn
All resonant with song, the groves, the bowers,
And lavish nature fills her lap with flowers.
To please each sense their early sweets combine,
The fig just ripening, and the fragrant vine;
Ten thousand charms shall bless this hallowed day,
Arise my love,—my fair one, come away."

Hail, new creation ! sovereign work of grace !
In Paradise shall man regain his place,—
A fruitful field in ancient Eden's stead,
With pure religion, o'er the world shall spread ;
Break forth with praise ye mountains, sing ye plains,
Applaud ye waving woods, for Jesus reigns.
Yet death still lingers here ; then hail the love,
That won for man a Paradise above !
Around the throne, the purchased myriads stand
Of every kindred, and from every land !
O'er angel forms celestial garments flow
Baptized in blood, yet whiter than the snow ;
The church triumphant claims her Saviour's breast,
In perfect victory, is PERFECT REST.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RACE.

“ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith:” HEB. xii, 1, 2.

WHERE classic Elis spreads its level plain,
Breathless they run a withering crown to gain ;
No weight impedes them in their rapid flight,
Their loins are girded, and their vest is light,
While circling multitudes inflame his soul,
The victor bounds impetuous to the goal ;
There, with spread arms, the noble Umpire stands,
Grace on his lips, the laurel in his hands ;
The painful struggle once himself had borne,
The frame exhausted, and the hope forlorn ;
Yet great his victory ; and now serene,
He pours his golden gifts, and rules the scene.

Speed on believer ! urge thy sacred course,
Though faint thy nerve, exhaustless thy resource ;
Defy the stormy blast, the burning sun,
When weak yet strong, when halt prepared to run ;
Refreshed by streams which meet no mortal eye,
Sustained by hidden manna from the sky,
In simple faith, pursue thy swift career,
Unchecked by indolence, untamed by fear.
But oh ! beware lest some dear idol, prest
With strong emotion to thy anxious breast,

Some favourite passion, some besetting sin,
 Some fond ambition that still lurks within,
 Like golden wedge or leaden weight, be found,
 To bid thy footsteps linger o'er the ground;—
 Discard, dismiss them all, and free as air,
 To yon pearl gates with ardent hope repair.

Enlivening accents from the apostle's lyre,
 With comfort fraught, and winged with heavenly fire!
 But mine the rankling thorn, the wound, the smart,
 The dreary darkness of the lonesome heart,
 The oppressive power of Satan'sumbering wing,
 His foul suggestions and his torturing sting;
 How can I rise triumphant to behold
 Those gates of pearl, those streets of glass and gold,
 Those purest gems which once on earth were known,
 But now are sparkling in the Saviour's crown?
 I wrestle not with flesh and blood alone,
 High powers of wickedness inspire the groan,
 The rulers of yon black impending sky,
 Buffet my soul, and bid me curse and die!

Come! cease thy mourning, stay thy wild lament,
 For thee sweet messengers of joy are sent;
 Unseen—but yet beholding—round thee stand
 Angelic witnesses, a glorious band,
 Assist thy progress through this vale of woe,
 And tell of elimes where tears no longer flow.

Vast was the host proud Syria sent of old,
 To drag Elisha from the embattled hold;
 Alarmed his servant eyed the advancing force,
 The thousand chariots, the unnumbered horse;
 But friends from heaven, surrounded,—more were they
 Than all the foemen of that dread array;

And soon unfolding to his wondering view,
They proved the prophet safe, the promise true.
Such bright allies against infernal power,
Camp round the Christian in each dangerous hour,
Pity his conflicts, wipe his useless tears,
Polish his armour, and dispel his fears.
Thou child of grace ! for thee a golden tie
Binds heaven to earth in tenderest sympathy ;
When to his God one weeping sinner turns,
Joy in the hearts of myriad angels burns,
And for salvation's heirs—no gulph between—
The myriad angels minister unseen.
Nor those pure powers alone who never fell,
But saints redeemed from sin, and death, and hell,
Whose stains were purged in Zion's sacred flood,
Free-born, yet purchased with a Saviour's blood.
Two such were sent on Christ himself to wait,
Partake his counsels, and assist his state,
When Hermon's dewy top, or Carmel's height,
Beheld the Lord, and beam'd with borrowed light.
Ye ransomed souls, from various land and clime,
Gathered to glory in your Saviour's time ;
One faith, one practice, led you to the skies,
One blood redeemed you, and one song employs !
Patriarchs and prophets storied in the page
Which charms and teaches through each passing age,
The truly great of men, in whom were joined,
The childlike credence, and the master mind ;
The simple too yet wise, of every name,
The watchful, humble, followers of the Lamb ;
Some dear companions of our happier days,
Whose modest virtue was their highest praise,

Though well adorned they were with sight and sense
 And learning's store, and bright intelligence,—
 Do they not see thee, mourner, call thee friend,
 Pray God to speed thee to thy journey's end?

Hail Christian fellowship! thy comforts prove
 Our faith divine, our God a God of love;
 Unlike the unions of this changing world,
 Dear for a day,—and then to ruin hurl'd,—
 Thy band with cords of heavenly strength entwined,
 And yet so soft, so tender, so refined,
 Displays Jehovah's wisdom; he ordains
 Its gentle force to mitigate our pains.
 One mind pervades the children of the Lord,
 Who draw their wisdom from his written word,
 Renounce the elements of human strife,
 Deeply imbibe the message fraught with life,
 Repent their folly, weep their sin and thrall,
 And rest in Jesus as their all in all.
 One mind,—because one Holy Spirit theirs,
 Their light, their strength, the answer to their prayers,
 Their friend to guide them, by no doubtful ray,
 Through all the labyrinths of this darksome day,
 Their cleanser, searcher, soother, kindly given,
 The power that seals them as the sons of heaven.
 Joined to the head, where the sensorium lies,
 They learn to feel, to love, to sympathize;
 A mystic body, knit in living bonds,—
 One member grieves,—each distant nerve responds.
 Yet, while a common life pervades the whole,
 Distinctive features mark each single soul,
 And soul with soul combines, by special ties,
 Peculiar love, and choice affinities.

As changing form with diverse colour blends,
God gains his vast variety of ends ;
Ten thousand forms of fitness spring to view,
And Zion blooms in beauty ever new.
Nor is it likeness only that inspires
The excelling warmth of friendship's heaven-born fires ;
Far different qualities in union meet,
That each the other may assist, complete.
Thus sound discretion, clothed in gentlest love,
Constrains the rash to admire and then approve ;
Thus zeal superfluous yields to just control,
Thus weakness leans upon the hardier soul.

I sing of friendship,—I have lost a friend,
Whose faithfulness and truth could never bend ;
Hers was the cultur'd and the lucid mind,
The generous heart, the conduct ever kind,
The temper sensitive yet always mild,
The frank simplicity of nature's child,—
Nature unspoiled by fashion or by pride,
And yet subdued by grace, and sanctified ;
The cheerfulness, devoid of base alloy,
That bade her speed her even course with joy,
Yet left full scope, thro' her revolving years,
For love's fond grief, and pity's softest tears ;
The abstinence from self,—a humble view
Of all she said, and did, and thought, and knew ;
The elder's judgment in the youthful frame,
And love to God and man, a deathless flame.

Ere childhood yet its playful course had run,
Day's beam from heaven upon her spirit shone,
Taught her 'twas strength and happiness to pray,
Led her young footsteps to the narrow way,

And while pure pleasure seemed her cup to fill,
Gave her to know, the truth is lovelier still.
Her early covenant not vainly made,
Like some fair flower, she blossom'd in the shade,
Till with advancing years affliction came,
And wan disease oppress'd her slender frame.
Anxious we watched her, while through many a day,
In calm repose, on Jesu's breast she lay;
Her virtues grew in sorrow's lingering hour,
Her faith was deepen'd by the Saviour's power,—
She rose, replenished with abundant grace,
For larger duties, in a wider space.
Blest was our union; all that life endears
Brightened the current of those rapid years,
Brightened and swelled,—around, her bounty flowed,
Her soul, enlarging, with fresh fervour glowed;
Her views of truth extending more and more,
As Scripture, daily studied, spread its store,
'Twas hers each rougher wave of life to smooth,
To advise and comfort, elevate and soothe.
Fondly we hoped, when, with no faltering voice,
She bade her friends in Jesus Christ rejoice,
Fondly we hoped her gifts with years would grow,
To enlarge, improve, the struggling church below;
But God ordained a higher walk of love,
In boundless regions, with the blest above;
The summons came, the accepted hour was given,
Her sainted spirit smiled, and sprang to heaven.

Sweet to commune with those whose race is run!
The church in heaven, on earth, in Christ is one;
We feel their charity the grave survive,
Their pure affection cannot cease to live,

Till that blest moment when at Jesu's feet,
In heaven's high courts, his people all shall meet,
For ever joined to the seraphic throng,
In perfect love, and one harmonious song.

Such then our comrades, such the timely aid
That helps to wing our footsteps through the shade
Of life's short course; but lo! superior far,
To every creature, beams the morning star,
Leads and attracts us o'er the toilsome way,
The glorious herald of eternal day.

Jesus! the Lord and Umpire of the race,
In thee thy friends ten thousand beauties trace;
Image of God, to thee my heart appeals,
The Father's attributes thy face reveals;
Glory, and grace, and truth that cannot move,
Unbending holiness, unfathom'd love,
Omniscient wisdom too, and matchless skill
To form the soul, and regulate the will;
Thyself once plunged in sorrow's deepest wave,
Thou know'st to sympathize, thou know'st to save:
In thee God's power with human pity blends,
From thee our faith begins, in thee it ends!

THE CHILD OF THE LORD.

How bless'd is the child of the Lord,
When taught of the Father to run,
When led by the light of his word,
And cheer'd by the beams of his sun.

He listens with fear and delight,
To hear what the master shall say ;
He sleeps on his bosom all night,
And walks in his love all the day.

Though terrors may compass him round,
And wildly the tempest may blow ;
He fears not ; the rock he has found,
That rock he will never forego.

'Tis true that his pilgrimage here
Is chequer'd with sorrows and fears ;
'Tis true that the cross he must bear,
And weep in this valley of tears :

But patience, submission, and love,
Can sweeten the bitterest hours ;
And hope, from the heaven above,
Still shines, when the hurricane lowers.

Temptation, 'tis true, will assail,
And trial without and within ;
And deeply his soul must bewail
For inward corruption and sin.

But the rags he once counted his own,
Are consumed in celestial flame,
And a mantle is over him thrown,
Wash'd white in the blood of the Lamb.

ON SILENT WORSHIP.

LET deepest silence all around
Its peaceful shelter spread ;
So shall that living word abound,
The word that wakes the dead.

How sweet to wait upon the Lord
In stillness and in prayer !
What though no preacher speak the word,
A minister is there.

A minister of wondrous skill
True graces to impart ;
He teaches all the Father's will,
And preaches to the heart.

He dissipates the coward's fears,
And bids the coldest glow ;
He speaks ; and lo ! the softest tears
Of deep contrition flow.

He knows to bend the heart of steel,
He bows the loftiest soul ;
O'er all we think and all we feel,
How matchless his control !

And ah ! how precious is his love,
 In tenderest touches given :
It whispers of the bliss above,
 And stays the soul on heaven.

From mind to mind, in streams of joy,
 The holy influence spreads ;
'Tis peace, 'tis praise, without alloy,
 For God that influence sheds.

'Twas thus, where God himself is known
 To shine without a cloud,
The angel myriads round his throne,
 In solemn silence bowed.

And all were still and silent long,
 Nor dared one note to raise,
Till burst the vast extatic song,
 And heaven was fill'd with praise.

THE PAVILION.

“ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion :” Psa. xxvii, 5.

PAVILIONS and palaces rise o'er the land,
And noble and wealthy are they that command
 The pleasure and pomp of the world ;
Delicious their viands and glowing their wine,
And gorgeous and dazzling the emblems that shine
 On the banner by monarchs unfurled.

But vain is their honour, and brief is their day,
And the presage of night overhangs its display,
 They riot to wither and die ;
No charm can enliven the house of the dead,
Their banquet is past, and the cold worm is fed,
 Where princes and potentates lie.

The glory that here to the worldling is given,
Like meteors that gleam in the dark vault of heaven,
 Is lost in a moment to sight ;
The sheen of the jewels, the glare of the crown,
When the angel of death mows the lofty one down,
 Are quenched in the shadows of night.

There is a pavilion the world cannot see,
Of heavenly structure, appointed for thee,
Thou child of affliction and fears ;
Dismayed as thou art at the sight of thy sin,
'Tis thine a compassionate Saviour to win,
Who wept, and can pity thy tears.

Though the troubler of Israel come in like a flood,
Thy pardon is sealed with Immanuel's blood,
Immanuel calls thee his own ;
He quiets the storm of the penitent breast,
And under his shadow permits thee to rest,
Till he waft thee away to his throne.

How soft is that shadow, how sure its defence,
How transcendent its joys o'er the pleasures of sense,
Like the joys of the angels above !
His table with spiritual dainties is spread,
The wine of the kingdom, the heavenly bread,
And his banner is INFINITE LOVE.

MARTHA AND MARY.

ACTIVE, intent, with friendly ardour fraught,
Each nerve responding to some busy thought,
The faithful Martha strives ;
In sooth no wonder that for such a guest,
She deems it duteous to provide the best,
For in his life she lives.

Yes, in her gentle friend, her lowly Lord,
She views, with simple faith, the incarnate Word,
In whom are all our springs ;
Beneath that faded form, that eye of grief,
The piercing vision of her soul's belief,
Describes the King of kings.

As Abraham erst his visitants to greet,
And then to choose and dress the daintiest meat,
With eager footsteps ran :
Upon the mystic three, he joyed to wait,
While Abraham's Lord himself conversed and ate,
Or seemed to eat, with man.

Not vain her labour, yet a better part
Another chose, who had as warm a heart,
 And faith as clear and strong ;
Close at his feet, and level with the dust,
Adoring Mary sat, in humble trust,
 And looked and listened long.

The plaint that of the work she missed her share,
Nor helped to ply the busy housewife's care,
 Was heard, but heard in vain ;
The one thing needful was her happier choice,
To learn of Jesus and in him rejoice,
 And that she must retain.

Saviour of men, Immanuel, hear our cry,
Give us for thee to live, in thee to die,
 Oh calm the anxious breast ;
However in thy cause we toil or roam,
Still at thy feet provide a peaceful home,
 Where we may wait and rest.

CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM.

PSALM XLV.

My thoughts a glorious theme indite,
And ready is my pen to write,
 Thou fairest of the fair;
And swifter still my tongue to raise,
To thee an orison of praise,
 For grace beyond compare.

Then gird thee round with belt and sword,
Ride on, ride on, thou mighty Lord,
 Thy majesty display;
Well shall thy red right-hand express
Thy zeal for truth and righteousness,—
 Then prosper on thy way!

Winged by thy power, conviction's dart
Shall strike through many a rebel heart,
 Nor pierce all hearts in vain;
While every foeman prostrate lies,
A favoured few shall fall to rise,
 And die to live again.

O God, above the starry spheres,
Thy throne is set for endless years ;
Pure justice bears thy sword ;
Virtue and truth engage thy love ;
Sin draws thy vengeance from above,
Rejected and abhorr'd.

Therefore hath God upon thy head—
Thy God—the oil of gladness shed,
Without compare or measure ;
From ivory halls with spices stored,
Perfumes o'er all thy garments poured,
Are redolent of pleasure.

The Tyrian maids with gifts attend,
Before thee royal virgins bend
In jewelled drapery sheen ;
And graceful on thine arm reclines,
In purest gold from Ophir's mines,
Thy partner and thy queen.

O lady, bow the listening ear,
My counsel condescend to hear,—
The people once thy own,
Thy father's house, forget to love,
So shall the king thy charms approve,
Ah ! worship him alone !

Daughter of kings,—upon her vest
See nature's fairest forms exprest
With golden tissue wove ;

All glorious is the Bride within,
By God's free grace redeemed from sin,
And heavenly is her love.

Fair princess, in thy father's place
Shall spring to life a godly race,
And rule from shore to shore ;
Victorious in their Saviour's name,
With thee they share a deathless fame,
And live for evermore !

THE END.

Darwich :

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TERMS OF UNION.

REMARKS

ADDRESSED TO

THE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN

Bible Society,

BY

✓
JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

UNITA VIS FORTIOR.

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SECTION I.

ON THE LAWFULNESS OF SOCINIAN CO-OPERATION IN THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

IN reflecting on the history of the British and Foreign Bible Society, I feel that its friends and supporters have abundant reason to be at once thankful and humble. On the one hand, the Society has been blessed with unparalleled success in its great work of distributing the Scriptures; and collaterally, as well as by its direct operations, it has been the means of unspeakable benefit to thousands. On the other hand, it was assailed, at its commencement, by fierce opposition; and of late years has been tried and proved by difficulties of a very perplexing and harrassing nature. The apocryphal question in particular assumed at one period a most alarming aspect, and threatened to shake the institution to its foundation. Yet the hand of divine protection was over us still; the point in dispute was settled; and the Society has since pursued its course with increased dependence, I trust, on the Author of all good; but with all its original industry and vigour.

Another question, however, in a very plausible form, has now arisen, peculiarly calculated to confuse and afflict the minds of many persons—especially the young—who have hitherto delighted in assisting our

cause. I specify the young, because this question, although dressed in a new attire, is as old as the Society itself; and has long since been settled by the giant intellect of a Milner, and by the lucid good sense of a Dealtry, a Vansittart, and a Cunningham.

“Is it, on scriptural grounds, *lawful*, to allow persons who deny the divinity of Christ, to be connected with us in a *religious* society?” The objectors who put this question, appear to find no difficulty whatsoever in answering it in the negative; while the fondly attached friends of the old constitution are left to hang, as they please, on either horn of a desperate dilemma. They may either contradict Scripture by advocating a *religious* union with men of unsound principles; or they may declare that their favourite society is *not* religious. In either case they offend the young and ardent believer; and a society truly Christian both in its object and its character, is deprived, in consequence, of many of its zealous supporters. Nay, it must even undergo the affliction of seeing some of its former advocates converted, through a mere fallacy in reasoning, into determined adversaries.

That fallacy is however, easily detected. For it obviously lies in the double meaning of the term religious society. If by that term we mean a society religious in its constitution, or in other words a *church*, the question must indeed be answered in the negative. But if we mean nothing more than a society formed for the promotion of a religious object, then surely our answer may be safely given in the affirmative. In the former case the supposed connection with the Socinian is an unlawful *union*; in the latter case, it is a lawful *co-operation*.

The true and universal church of Christ, composed of all who are brought to "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," is a vast society essentially religious in its *constitution*; and it is not only unlawful but impossible, for its members to maintain, in *that character*, a union with any man (under whatsoever name) who denies the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But to contract our views for the sake of clearness into a narrower compass, any one of the denominations into which this Catholic church is divided, is in itself a society religious *by constitution*; and the same description is applicable to any single congregation of Christians.

Now although the doors of our respective places of worship are open to all men, it is a principle universally recognised among orthodox believers, that religious fellowship, or church union cannot be lawfully maintained either with persons of immoral character, or with those whose religious sentiments are heretical, in so much as *they hold not the Head*. The directions of the New Testament on both points are clear and decisive. Our Lord commanded that he who sinned against his brother and refused to obey the church, should be, to the disciple, "as a heathen man or a publican," that is, I presume, that he should no longer be treated as a brother in Christ. Paul directed the Corinthian Christians to "put away" from among them the incestuous offender; and not even to eat with any man "called a brother," whose conduct was dissolute and immoral.¹ And on another occasion, he says, "a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition *reject*."²

¹ 1 Cor. v, 11.

² Tit. iii, 10.

Should a member of the "religious society" of Friends, for example, be found professing and disseminating Socinian principles, we should consider it our duty, without the least breach of charity towards him, to annul his membership. I well remember an occasion when a respectable individual, was, on this very ground, separated from the society. When he appealed against his disownment to our yearly meeting, it was decided by an assembly of more than a thousand Friends, and without a single dissentient voice, that our religious fellowship with him must cease; and virtually, that we could not lawfully maintain such a fellowship with any man, however moral and respectable, who denied and opposed the doctrine of the deity of Christ. I presume that, on the same principle, no orthodox minister of the church of England, or of any dissenting body, would admit a known Socinian³ into the bosom of *his* church, by allowing him to partake, with the brethren, of the bread and wine at the communion table.

The reason is plain—viz., that if we allowed *religious fellowship* with such an individual, we should, in the face of all the world, sanction his errors, and support them by the authority of the respective churches to which we belong. In such a case the guilt of his heresy would be ours as well as his own. As far as the word "sin" is applicable to the subject,

³ By *Socinians* I mean persons who uphold a doctrine which in modern times was first taught by Socinus and the Fratres Poloni—namely, that Jesus Christ possessed *only* the human nature—that he was nothing more than a *man*. I am quite aware that Socinus and his brethren held certain exalted views respecting the government of Christ, which are rejected by the generality of "modern Unitarians." But I object to the term "Unitarians," which in its *proper* sense is applicable to all true Christians.

we should be what the apostle commands us *not* to be—"partakers in other men's sins."⁴

But the clergyman, the dissenting minister, and the Friend, who alike refuse to maintain church union with a Socinian, have hitherto alike consented to admit of his co-operation with them in the distribution of the Holy Scriptures. They freely allow him or any other person to become, with themselves, a member, of a society which although religious as to its object, is not so as to its constitution, and which no more partakes of the nature of a church, than any partnership whatsoever formed amongst men, for civil or benevolent purposes.

Three societies are formed in the city of N—, the first for lighting the streets, the second for giving bread to the poor, the third for distributing Bibles; and these societies are severally open to all persons of whatsoever description, who are inclined to support them. A serious and orthodox Christian, residing in the place, subscribes to them all; and he does so with a safe conscience, because he cordially approves their several objects. True it is, that in the first society, he is associated with many men of immoral and irreligious character; in the second, with several worldly-minded though benevolent persons; and even in the third, with a few individuals, some of whose religious sentiments he disapproves and condemns. But in none of the three cases does he compromise any principle of his own, or in the least degree involve himself in the sin or error of his associates. He co-operates with them, only in those things which are indubitably harmless and good.

⁴ 1 Tim. v, 22.

It may indeed be remarked that there is an important difference in the nature of the objects pursued by the three institutions. That of the first, is civil; that, of the second, simply philanthropic; that of the third, religious. But this view of the subject only strengthens our argument; for the scale of the Christian's duty must surely rise in a corresponding climax. The better, the holier, the more divine, the purpose—the clearer, the more imperative, is the call on his co-operation. The principle which binds him to the support of the Bible Society in particular, is one of clear scriptural authority, of immense practical importance, and strong enough to overcome a thousand ill-founded prejudices and scruples; namely, that it is always our duty, under every possible circumstance, and by all lawful means in our power, to promote the happiness of our fellow-men, and the glory of God our Saviour.

But although the distribution of the Holy Scriptures is clearly a *religious* object, we are never to forget that it is one of a most comprehensive tendency. Even the unbeliever may find a sufficient motive for promoting it, in the *civil* and *intellectual* benefits which the Bible has been the means of concurring upon mankind.

It is also an object of a perfectly simple character, and so fixed and unvarying in its nature, as not to be endangered by the channel through which it passes. No Christian would entrust to a sceptic the task of preaching the gospel, or of giving religious instruction to children. But in distributing the Scriptures without note or comment, even the sceptic may do unmixed good. The book which he circulates will still bear its silent and conclusive testimony to the "truth as it is in Jesus."

I have often thought that the grounds on which a serious Christian stands in connexion with other men, while he prosecutes his various objects in life, may be compared to the successive stories of a *pyramid*. When he is transacting the common business of the day, with men of all characters and conditions, he is surrounded by vast numbers of people, and stands on the broad basement story. Here, while he abstains from evil things, he is compelled to communicate with many evil persons, and he calls to mind the words of the Lord Jesus, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."⁵ But now an hospital is to be built; he mounts to the second story—his ground is narrowed, and his company lessens. The utterly selfish and dissolute disappear from his view; but he still finds himself in communication with the worldly as well as the religious; with the infidel as well as with the believer. Christian benevolence, however, has new services in store for him. A society is formed for distributing the Scriptures without note or comment. The object is one of undoubted excellence, and he heartily engages in the cause. Here he stands on the third section of the pyramid. Again the company is diminished; again the circumference is contracted. Yet it is large enough to comprehend all reflecting persons of every class, who value the Bible and approve of its dissemination. Our Philanthropist knows that the work is pure and good, and though he by no means agrees in sentiment with all who cooperate in it, the last thing he dreams of, is to narrow the circle either of its friends or of its efficacy.

⁵ John xvii, 15.

But while in distributing the Bible he stands on a common level with all who approve that object, he well knows the importance of a sound interpretation of its contents; and on the next story of the pyramid, he finds himself engaged with rather fewer companions, and within somewhat narrower boundaries, in a Missionary Society, or in a Sabbath-day School, formed for the express purpose of affording to those who need it, *evangelical* instruction. The merely nominal Christian, and the Socinian subscriber to the Bible Society have now parted from him; yet he is still encompassed by many persons whose religious views on secondary points, differ from his own. He ascends, therefore, when occasion requires it, to an area of still smaller dimensions, and there he joins the members of his own church, in distributing tracts written in defence of the sentiments or practices peculiar to themselves. Finally, he has some solitary duty to perform, or some opinion, all his own, to maintain or develop; and behold, he stands alone on the top of the pyramid!

Now, I contend, that in the whole of this process, the Christian (barring the weakness and sin to which we all are liable) is clearly devoid of blame. He eschews the evil, whosoever may separate from him; he chooses the good, whosoever may unite with him. With a steady consistency, he pursues his own path of duty, and keeps a conscience void of offence in the sight of God and man.

The Christian ought ever to fix his attention on principles, rather than on persons. While he cleaves to the immutable rule of right in his own conduct—abstaining from all that is evil, and doing all that is good—the question of his connection with other

men, will mostly find its own right level. The pursuit of an unbending line of duty, will separate him from the world, just in the manner, and just in the degree, which true Christianity requires—which God, in his perfect wisdom has seen meet to ordain.

But it is objected, that besides church-fellowship, there are other kinds of association and intercourse with unbelievers, which the Scriptures clearly forbid; and this is certainly true.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” says the apostle Paul; “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and *touch not the unclean thing*, and I will receive you.”⁶

The unbelievers here alluded to, were doubtless the heathen among whom the Corinthian Christians were living, and who were sunk in every species of vice. And what was the connection with them which the apostle forbids? Certainly not the common intercourse of life, for this, in another passage, he expressly allows;⁷ certainly not a co-operation in any *good* thing, for this would have been laudable, as well as harmless; but such an intimate and familiar association, as would have involved the Christians themselves in idolatrous and dissolute practices. The apostle commands them to come out and be separate, and not to touch **THE UNCLEAN THING**.

⁶ 2 Cor. vi, 14—17.

⁷ 1 Cor. v, 10.

On precisely the same principle, the apostle John, in his epistle “unto the elect lady and her children,” warns them (as is supposed) against the dangerous errors of the Gnostics, who denied the real humanity of our blessed Lord, and presumed to declare that his incarnation was ideal. “Many deceivers,” says the apostle, “are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an anti-Christ. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his *evil deeds*.”⁸ There is reason to believe that the heretics here mentioned, were of a most immoral character—the same class of persons who are elsewhere described as deniers of the Lord, spots in the feasts of charity, filthy dreamers, dissolute, ungovernable men, who *crept* into houses, and by their false doctrine, led captive the weak and unstable.⁹ Who can wonder that the apostle commanded his female friend to close against such persons the door of hospitality? Had she opened that door, she would have exposed herself and her children to unutterable danger—she would have encouraged the wicked devices of the enemies of truth—she would have become a partaker in their “evil deeds.”

While it would be unfair, even in those who most deeply deprecate their errors, to compare the modern Socinians with these dissolute heretics, or with the still more depraved idolaters of Corinth, and while I am persuaded that no consistent followers of Jesus would ever think of withholding from them the offices of kindness and courtesy, I by no means wish

⁸ 2 John 7—11.

⁹ 2 Tim. iii, 1—9. 2 Pet. ii, 1—22. Jude 4—8.

to shut my eyes to the principle which these passages enforce. That principle I conceive to be, that we ought not voluntarily to involve ourselves in close and familiar connections with persons of immoral conduct, or of unsound religious principles; because in so doing we countenance their sin or heresy, and expose our own souls to imminent peril.

But to plead these passages as objections to the comprehensive constitution of the Bible Society, must surely be regarded as very fallacious. That constitution, as every one knows, involves no such connections. Between the mere admission of Socinians as our helpers in a work of mercy, and that dangerous familiarity with idolaters and heretics—that participation in their follies and crimes—which is forbidden by the apostles, there does not appear to be even a shadow of analogy or resemblance.¹

¹ It is truly surprising that a grave argument against Socinian co-operation in the Bible Society should have been founded by any sensible man, on the following passage in the book of Ezra.—“ Now when the *adversaries* of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, then they came unto Zerubbabel and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do, &c. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as *king Cyrus, the king of Persia*, hath commanded us. Then the people of the land *weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building.*”¹

Who does not perceive that the insidious offer of the adversaries of Judah was made for the sake of obtaining a better opportunity of *preventing* the building of the temple? Who cannot understand, that Zerubbabel and his friends were too wise to be caught in the toil—that they did not deem it expedient to admit their adver-

¹ Ezra iv, 1—4.

On the review of the whole argument, I consider myself fully justified in concluding,

I. That it is unlawful for any body of orthodox Christians to maintain a fellowship in the church, with persons of a vicious character, or with those who are proved to be unbelievers in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; and further, that it is the duty of individual Christians to abstain, as far as possible, from an *intimate association* with those, whose society has a tendency either to injure their morals, or to sap their faith.

saries into the heart of their operations; and that had they meant to express the general principle that no Gentiles might unite with the Lord's people in a work of godliness, they would never have commended their undertaking, by pleading the authority of a *heathen* monarch?

Equally irrelevant is the argument raised on the case of Amaziah. This king of Judah made war against the Edomites, and *hired* as auxiliaries a hundred thousand Israelites. "But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim. But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy." . . . "And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given for the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than these." ²

I can have no objection to that lively imagination in some of our opposers, which has led them to *illustrate* by king Amaziah's unwillingness to part with his talents, our *heartfelt anxiety* to keep up the funds of our institution; but who would ever have thought that a conclusive analogy would have been discovered between the prince of Judah and the Earl-street committee—between the circumstances of the ancient Jews and those of the Bible Society—or between *giving* a vast sum to the Israelites, to induce them to assist in a bloody warfare, and *accepting* the voluntary subscriptions of Socinians, for a work of benevolence and mercy?

² 2 Chron. xxv, 6—9.

II. That, on the other hand, the Scriptures clearly allow such an intercourse with persons of every character and creed, as is necessary, in the order of Providence, for the common purposes of life ; and more especially, that as a general principle, it is lawful, to accept the honest assistance of any man living, in doing unquestionable *good*.

I cannot properly conclude the present section without remarking, that among the various denominations who are joined in the partnership of the Bible Society, the Socinian is the only party who makes a concession ; and it is one of vital importance. In distributing the Holy Scriptures without note or comment, in the authorised English version at home, and in various foreign versions abroad, he distributes the best of antidotes against all that is false and dangerous in his own opinions. By whatsoever hands the book may be given, and by whatsoever hands received, it will never fail to declare the eternal divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or cease to proclaim the infinite preciousness of his atoning blood.

This is the obvious reason why the Society, even in the early days of its popularity, was joined by only a small number of Socinians, and why that small number has since gradually become more and more inconsiderable. These few individuals are laudably willing to make a large concession for the sake of that *general good* which the Society is effecting. Some of them have, to my knowledge, been generous contributors to the institution ; and others, patient and diligent labourers in prosecuting its object. Who would not encourage them in a work which is not only good and useful in itself, but which may probably be the means of directing their own attention to truths of the high-

est importance to the salvation of their souls? What sound and sober Christian would shut the door which charity has opened for their entrance? What right-minded friend of orthodox religion, would not pray that their *deed* may be blessed, and that *they* may be blessed in their deed?



SECTION II.

ON THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

THE laws and regulations of the British and Foreign Bible Society formed at the commencement of the institution and since recited in each of the annual reports, are distinguished by remarkable simplicity; and I have no doubt that this is the reason why during twenty-seven years they have continued, to the entire satisfaction of the great bulk of its members, without any alteration.

They first state the object of the institution—the circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment at home and abroad; at home in the authorised versions *only*.

In the second place they declare the terms of membership—terms which have no reference whatsoever to character, conduct, or opinions, but simply to *subscription*. Every subscriber of a guinea annually, or of ten guineas at once, is a member; of five guineas an-

nually, or of fifty pounds at once, a governor, with power to attend and vote at the meetings of the committee. Every *executor* paying a bequest of fifty pounds is a member; of one hundred pounds, a governor.

It is evident, therefore, that, on terms simply pecuniary, a membership in this Society is open to *all mankind*; and equally evident, that by the common law of all charitable institutions—a law founded on plain justice—every member *of the society is eligible on the committee of management.*

This principle is sufficient of itself to settle the meaning of the ninth law, which describes the constitution of the committee—that it should consist of thirty-six laymen, of whom six are to be foreigners; and that of the remaining number, one half should be “members of the established church,” and the other half “members of other denominations of Christians.”

It is obvious that the word *Christians* is not here used in a high and restricted sense, as denoting only such believers in Christ as are orthodox in sentiment, and consistent in practice; but in its general meaning, as descriptive of all persons who acknowledge the truth of Christianity. It is equally clear, that the *stress* of the law does not rest at all upon this term, which is here used only incidentally. The society recognises the fundamental principle that *all* its members are eligible to be its governors; takes it for granted that they will, as a matter of course, be professing Christians; and finally enacts, that its committee should consist half of the members of the established church, and half of dissenters. Every one must perceive,

after due reflection, that this is the sole meaning of the law.³

It is unquestionable then, that, according to the original plan and present constitution of the Bible Society, nothing excludes from membership but the want of an adequate subscription; and that nothing bars from eligibility on the committee, but a want of membership.

Such are the principal laws under which, during more than a quarter of a century, the Bible Society pursued its steady course of beneficence. But, at the anniversary meeting of 1831, a gentleman, of well known zeal and respectability, threw amongst us the apple of discord, in the shape of the following resolutions:—

1. "That the British and Foreign Bible Society is pre-eminently a religious and Christian institution.
2. "That no person rejecting the doctrine of a TRIUNE JEHOVAH can be considered a member of a Christian institution.
3. "That, in conformity with this principle, the expression 'denominations of Christians,' in the ninth general law of the society, be distinctly understood to include such denominations of Christians only, as profess their belief in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity."

The reader will observe that the proposal contained in the third of these resolutions, rests on the principle stated in the second; and again that this principle depends entirely on the assertion contained in the

³ Could any reasonable doubt be entertained on this subject, it would be immediately settled, by the testimony of Lord Teignmouth, and Joseph Hughes—the first the president, the second one of the secretaries of the institution, from its first origin.

first resolution, viz. that the Bible Society is a *religious* institution. I have already endeavoured to show that this assertion is susceptible of two meanings—that in one meaning it is clearly true; but that in the other, *which alone supports the principle here advanced*, it is notoriously false. In the present instance, therefore, that principle falls to the ground; and with it falls the only reasonable or scriptural basis of the proposed change in our ninth law.

Such, unquestionably, was the judgment of that vast assembly to which this proposal was offered; for after a long discussion, it was negatived by an overwhelming majority.

I have now to observe, that it was the tendency of this resolution, and had it been carried, would have been its certain and immediate effect, *utterly to change the constitution of the Bible Society*. By a summary act of power, we should have excluded from membership all persons who are unwilling to profess their belief in “a triune Jehovah;” and, by our revised law, we should have imposed such a profession *as a condition* on any person who should hereafter be desirous of becoming a member. Whether such a profession might be extracted from him by a personal inquisition, or only made binding on his conscience by a general edict, it would still be the *test* of his fitness for membership, and one of the terms without acceding to which he could not be accepted.

Although I deeply feel the importance of that great doctrine to which these resolutions refer, and sincerely desire to avoid even the appearance of throwing it into the shade, I nevertheless rejoice in the decision of the meeting. After deliberate consideration, I am fully convinced, that to have

adopted this proposal would have been, in the first place, *unjust*; in the second place, *useless*; and in the third place, *destructive*.

I. The injustice of the proposed change may be fairly illustrated by a reference to the common business of life. A B C and D enter into a partnership in a cotton manufactory. Articles are drawn up and agreed to. A capital is raised by the voluntary contribution of all the parties, and it is applied to the formation of a stock in trade. After a long period, however, of harmony among the partners, and of undeviating success in the business, A B and C discover that one of the articles of partnership, on which D's right to a share in the business entirely depends, is much too comprehensive to suit their opinions. They, therefore, change the objectionable provision, and inform D that he is no longer a partner. They are well aware, indeed, that D has contributed, like themselves, to the capital of the concern, and possesses his lawful share of the stock in trade; but this is a circumstance which A B and C overlook; they at once rid themselves of D's *person*, and retain his *property*.

But who does not perceive that even if D's capital be duly paid out, the very act of tampering with the articles of partnership and of dismissing him against his will (thereby depriving him of his future profits and of various advantages which the union confers upon him) is an act of palpable injustice?

Now although the *object* of the Bible Society is benevolent and religious, its *constitution* is in various respects the same as that of partnership in trade. An extensive business is required to be carried on; a capital is raised by voluntary contribution for

the purpose, and the society, with a view to the permanent prosecution of its object, becomes possessed of considerable property. The premises in Earl Street, the library, the stock of paper, types, and books, and various sums of money invested in the public funds, all belong to the institution. Although they can be applied only to a particular object, they are nevertheless *property*, in which every member of the society has an equitable interest.

It cannot therefore be competent to any majority in the society, however large and overwhelming, by altering the terms of partnership, to exclude even the smallest minority from their membership in the body. To dismiss them from the society while we retain their share of the property, would be an act of pecuniary spoliation.

But can we not first pay them out their proportion of the capital, and then dismiss them? Certainly not with honour, unless we have their own consent. The society publicly declares that all persons may become its members, on certain pecuniary terms, i. e. on buying that privilege at a particular price. On these terms, the whole body enters into a virtual contract with every individual subscriber; and although the majority of the society may afterwards repent of the contract in certain cases, and wish to annul it, to do so with integrity, unless both parties consent, appears to be impossible.

This argument applies to annual subscribers just as certainly as to subscribers for life; yet in the latter case, its application is peculiarly *clear*. I am well acquainted with a Soeinian gentleman, who became by subscription a life member of the Bible Society; *he bought his life membership of us for twenty*

guineas. If we forcibly deprive him of his right, and nevertheless retain his money, it appears to me that we commit, *however unintentionally*, an act of robbery. But even if we return his money with interest, we cannot disown him justly against his own will; for the bargain between us has long been complete, and should he still prefer his membership to his guineas, he has an indubitable right to retain it.

In point of fact, there are many persons to whom a membership in this noble institution has a value, for moral and religious ends, far beyond money. I freely confess myself to be one of that number; and whatsoever may be my peculiar sentiments, it is my clear conviction, that as long as I faithfully fulfil the laws of the society, so long my membership is an unalienable privilege.

Were it true that the terms of partnership established in the Bible Society are unscriptural, I conceive that the only lawful remedy would be the winding up of the concern. In the mean time, should any member of the society believe them to be so, he is at liberty to withdraw; but to change these terms, and so to change them, as to exclude some of the contracting parties from their membership, can never be justified, except by the consent of them all.

II. To argue upon that which is unjust, as if it could be necessary or useful, is, in my opinion, absurd. But supposing that the proposed change in our laws could have been adopted with justice, I shall now endeavour to show that it is *unnecessary*, and would be *useless*.

One might have imagined from the vast excitement which has arisen on the subject, that the Socinians formed an actual majority, or at least a fearful pro-

portion, of the members of the Bible Society. But what is the fact? A gentleman who has taken great pains to inquire into the subject, and whose calculations appear to rest on sound data, computes the number of office-bearers in the Bible Society and its dependencies throughout Great Britain, at 10,000, of whom *three* are Socinians; the number of members of committees, including collectors, at 37,500, of whom *thirty-two* are Socinians; and the number of subscribers at 100,000, of whom not quite *one hundred* are Socinians. To alarm ourselves, therefore, lest the institution should be subjected to the guidance and sway of the Socinians, appears, to say the least of it, extremely needless.

Here however I wish freely to acknowledge, that much of the work entrusted to the committee of the *Parent Society*, is of a description which ought, as far as possible, to be kept in the hands of orthodox and evangelical men. I refer particularly to promoting or publishing new editions or translations of the Holy Scriptures. This is a sentiment in which the great bulk of the society is well known to unite; and what is the consequence? *During the twenty-seven years of the Society's existence, not a single Socinian has ever been chosen on the committee!*

My object is to defend the principles of the Bible Society, rather than to advocate the proceedings of its committee. Nevertheless the latter is a subject on which the present circumstances of the society render it desirable that something should be said. Various charges have been uttered and circulated, of which it has been the apparent object to inculcate a notion, that the committee have not been faithful in the execution of their trust — that they have

been guilty of great laxity in promoting the circulation of editions or translations of the Scriptures, which contain passages unsoundly rendered, or which are polluted by infidel prefaces or notes.

Those who, like myself, are acquainted with many veterans in the cause of Christ, who act on that committee, will be little disposed to believe these charges, in *their extent*. But the committee are, I believe, far from wishing to assert that, in the overwhelming multiplicity of their business, they have not occasionally fallen into error. The concerns of the Bible Society are of a very wide and complicated nature; and it would be extraordinary indeed, if, in the whole multitude of editions and versions which they have aided in circulating, nothing should have been discovered to occasion them regret. The circumstances of this nature, which have arisen, are however wonderfully few, and utterly undeserving of the continued notice of the public. After a careful and diligent inquiry, the following cases are the whole which I have been able to collect.

1. At an early period in the history of the society, an edition of the German Bible, partly through the aid of our funds, was printed at Strasburg. Professor Haffner of that place, without the knowledge of the committee in London, added to the volume a preface, which is said to have been of a very objectionable tendency. Whether it was so or not, (and witnesses vary on the subject,) such a proceeding was directly opposed to one of our primary rules. As soon therefore as the circumstance was made known to the committee, Lord Teignmouth, as well as the other officers of the society, warmly remonstrated, and con-

tinued their remonstrances until the preface was withdrawn.⁴

2. In the year 1815, the Hanoverian Bible Society, which had been aided by a grant from our funds, also published an edition of the German Scriptures, to which they affixed a preface. As the chief object of this preface was to recommend the perusal of Scripture, its publishers erroneously conceived that its being attached to the Bible was consistent with the laws of the society. The edition was exhausted before the existence of the preface was discovered by the committee, and their pecuniary connection with the Hanoverian society being dissolved, they have had no controul over the subsequent editions. The committee have since purchased a few copies of this Bible of the printer at Hanover, on the express condition that the preface should be removed, but finding that the condition was neglected, they have closed their connection with him.

3. In the year 1817, 500*l.*, and in 1818, 250*l.*, were granted to the Lausanne Bible Society, to assist them in republishing Ostervald's French Bible; the work of revision being placed under the care of five Swiss clergymen, headed by Professor Levade, none of whom were Socinians. The late John Owen, when travelling on the continent, attended their labours of collation, and was well satisfied with the execution of the work. Afterwards however, Professor Levade was induced, by the over-persuasion of his co-adjutors, and without the privity of the Bible Society, to make some changes in the version, and

⁴ See "Minutes of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the subject of the preface to the edition of the Strasburg Bible," &c. London, 1826.

to add several notes. Subsequently to the publication of the edition, these facts were discovered, and the committee in London immediately remonstrated with expressions of unfeigned surprise and sorrow. Levade candidly acknowledged his error, and offered from his private funds, to return 250*l*. This offer the committee very properly declined to accept.⁵

4. In the year 1819, Hali Bey's Turkish version of the New Testament, discovered at Leyden by Dr. Pinkerton, was published by the Bible Society, under the care of Professor Kieffer of Paris. In consequence of a mere misunderstanding, the Professor edited the text as he found it, without proposing any alteration. After 100 copies had been circulated, the text of the edition was publicly objected to by Dr. Henderson, who had detected in it various errors, and a few mis-translations of a serious nature. The edition was, in consequence, suspended; and copies were not again circulated, until eight pages had been cancelled, and a table annexed to the volume of every remaining error of the least importance. In proceeding to circulate this amended edition, the sub-committee to whom was deputed the

⁵ See "Minutes of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the subject of a revised edition of Ostervald's Bible, published at Lausanne," &c. London, 1826. There appears to be nothing in the Lausanne edition of Ostervald's Bible which bears the stamp of Socinianism. The admirable testimony to the divinity of our Saviour, contained in 1 John v, 20, is there given with much greater force than in our own version. "Mais nous savons que le Fils de Dieu est venu, et il nous a donné l'intelligence pour connoître le vrai Dieu, et nous sommes en ce vrai Dieu, étant dans son fils Jésus Christ; C'EST LUI qui est LE VRAI DIEU, et la vie éternelle."

care of this business, and over whom Lord Teignmouth himself presided, received the sanction of twelve eminent Turkish scholars, two of whom were clergymen of the Established church. In the mean time, Professor Kieffer, with the help of other learned men, was proceeding with an edition of the whole Turkish Bible, which has since been published, and has received the public and cordial sanction of Dr. Henderson himself.⁶

5. The Society has occasionally purchased copies of the Danish New Testament, which was revised by order of the king of Denmark in 1815, under the care of bishop Münter and others of his clergy. In this revision, some exceptionable renderings, together with certain marginal notes, had been introduced, without the knowledge of the committee of the Bible Society. Here, however, they had no ground for remonstrance; for they did not possess the slightest controul over the Danish authorities. When they discovered the defects of the edition, they totally suspended their purchases, and, on their own responsibility, re-published the whole Danish Bible, after an *old standard version*.⁷

6. In the year 1818, a thousand copies of the Hebrew Bible were purchased by the Society from the Canstein Institution at Halle. A minute inspec-

⁶ See Twentieth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, appendix; also "Facts respecting certain versions of the Holy Scriptures, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in reply to the Quarterly Review," by T. P. Platt, 4th edition, 1832.

⁷ See "Facts," &c. by T. P. Platt, and "Remarks upon the recent accusations against the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society," by G. Stokes, a member of the Committee, 2nd Edition, 1826.

tion of the edition has since led to the detection of objectionable Latin *headings* to some of the chapters, especially in the book of Canticles — a circumstance of no very alarming nature ; but such as it is, incapable of being now remedied, because the books have long since been circulated.

Most of the cases which have now been detailed, occurred at a period when many active members of the present committee were not in office ; and almost all of them through the fault of the agents of *foreign societies*. It is the assured belief of the committee, that their own agents abroad are, without one exception, men of sound religious views ; and, if persons of a different description are employed by any of the foreign societies, the committee can only lament a circumstance which they have no power to remedy.

No assistance is now afforded to these societies, except in the shape of bound copies of Bibles or Testaments ; and the committee, taught by long experience, are extremely careful not to promote the circulation of any new editions of foreign versions, until their conformity to the laws of the Society has been satisfactorily ascertained. Every new or revised *version* is of course subjected to *close scrutiny*.

After considering this plain, unvarnished statement, I trust the reader will agree with me in the sentiment, that no facts have occurred, either with respect to the constitution of the committee itself, or in the annals of its proceedings, from which we can in the least degree infer, that there is any necessity for the proposed test. To ascribe the few errors which have occurred, to the want of such a test, or to the absence of a sincere attachment to orthodox views, in either

the late or the present members of the committee, is at once uncharitable and absurd.

I consider it a duty to declare my own conviction, that the committee and various officers of the parent society, while, under their many trials of patience, they claim our brotherly sympathy, are deserving of our cordial thanks for their ceaseless labours, and of our unreserved *confidence*, as honourable and religious men. Were I requested to point out the particulars which have peculiarly excited in my own mind this feeling of confidence, I should mention the evangelical tone of all their reports; their remarkable Christian forbearance towards their bitterest opponents; and, above all, the honest stedfastness with which they have resisted all encroachments on the constitution of the Bible Society.

While there appears to be nothing in the history or condition of the Society which affords any reasonable pretext for the introduction of a test, it is equally evident, in my opinion, that, even if it were otherwise, a test would be useless. History and experience afford a multitude of proofs that this is a contrivance, which opposes no effectual bar to the selfishness and ambition of mankind. Man cannot examine the heart of his brother; and, where any thing is to be gained by it, professions of orthodox religion are easily made even by its most determined enemies. How thankful then ought we to be that, in the Bible Society, we are already in possession of securities against the influence of unsound religious views, to the cogency of which the best contrived test would add nothing—because they depend on principles of an unchanging character.

The first of these securities is the evangelical nature of our object—the universal diffusion of the Holy Scriptures. Now, although this object may, on civil and moral grounds, be approved and supported even by persons of low religious views, its attractive power *principally* depends on its subserviency to the higher purpose of evangelizing the world—of making our fellow-men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Hence, I conceive, it must always follow, that an immense majority of subscribers to this society will be found amongst those who *approve* evangelical religion; and that its most zealous and persevering supporters, on whom the management of its concerns of course devolve, will generally be religious men, to whom Jesus Christ and the doctrine of his cross are precious above all things. Between the sentiments of Socinians—much more of infidel Neologians—and the main ulterior purpose of the Bible Society, there is no inherent accordance, no natural *affinity*.

Our second safe-guard is the actual meaning of the book which we circulate. Could the original texts of the Old and New Testaments be fairly rendered in such a manner as to justify the errors of Socinus, we might indeed tremble for our orthodox faith, and fear the influence of heresy in our camp. But satisfied as some of us are, from long investigation, that true criticism utterly rejects the Socinian interpretations of Scripture—persuaded also that the rules of interpretation are now too well understood to admit the possibility of long continued falsification—we are not afraid of encouraging the translation of the Scriptures into every language under heaven;

and although, through inadvertence, even material errors may creep in for a season, we rely on the native vigour of *truth* for their speedy and permanent extermination.⁸

In the mean time, however, nothing can be more unfounded than the notion, that, by tampering with a few principal texts, any man can extinguish the light of Scripture, or drive Christ and his divinity out of the Bible. What spiritually-minded reader of the book is not aware, that if evangelical religion is extinguished in one passage, it springs up in a thousand others—that it belongs to the very nature and texture of the book—that historians, prophets, evangelists, and apostles, with a force which the most fallacious criticism can never overcome, combine in the formation of *one record*? “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”⁹

Above all, however, we ought never to forget that our ultimate security against every evil, in the prosecution of our work, is to be found in the gracious protection of that God and Saviour, of whom the

⁸ Although I should be sorry to employ the generality of German critics in the work of the Bible Society, I doubt whether the *mis-translation of Scripture* is greatly to be apprehended from them. Many years ago the Socinian controversy prevailed in Germany, much as it has done, of later years, in our own country. But in the course of their eager pursuit after knowledge, the Germans happened to take up the science of *exegesis*, i. e. of *interpretation*, which they presently reduced to a number of wholesome rules. Finding that these rules were utterly opposed to the Socinian glosses on Scripture, many of them lapsed into infidelity; and now, in commenting on the Bible (just as they would do on the works of Sophocles or Virgil) they adopt, to a great extent, its *orthodox interpretation*.

⁹ 1 John v, 11.

Scripture testifies, and who looks down with approbation on every honest effort for the promotion of his kingdom. As long as we endeavour to exercise a salutary caution respecting the versions which we circulate, and the agents whom we employ, so long we may reverently believe that he will continue to bless us—both by gradually enlarging the sphere of our usefulness, and by preserving us from the poisonous influence of vital error.

III. Before I proceed to point out the *destructive* tendency of the proposed change in our constitution, I would beseech the reader calmly to reflect on what the Bible Society now is, and on what it has already been enabled to effect.

On turning over the reports of the institution, I observe the following facts; that the contributions of last year alone amounted to £95,000, and the distribution to 470,000 copies—that the sum total expended by the society, is upwards of one million, seven hundred thousand pounds—that the whole number of Bibles and Testaments distributed is seven millions—that nearly five millions of copies, in addition, have been disseminated by foreign societies—that, in the dominions of the King of Great Britain alone, there have been formed upwards of three thousand auxiliary societies and associations; to which may, I believe, be added about two thousand kindred institutions in foreign parts—and finally that the society has aided in the dissemination, printing, or translation, of the whole or parts of the Bible, in one hundred and fifty-three languages and dialects, in seventy-two of which the Scriptures never before existed.

On examining some of the particulars of this statement, I further observe, that an immense population

in Great Britain and Ireland have been supplied with the sacred volume, in the English, Gaëlic, Welsh, and Irish languages—that a multitude of editions have been poured into Germany, in which country many hundred thousand copies have been received by the Roman Catholics—that “infidel France” has now her flourishing Bible institutions—that more than six hundred societies have been formed in America, which are effecting a distribution almost equal to our own—that translations have been made into most of the dialects of Hindostan, and that repeated editions of some of these versions have been demanded by the natives—that the Chinese version (a mighty work in itself) has already carried on a successful warfare against idolatry, in the Indian Archipelago—that even New South Wales has her Bible Societies, and has contributed largely to our funds—that the Amharic New Testament has been printed for Abyssinia—finally, that the South Sea Islander has now exchanged his cruel rites, the inhabitant of Madagascar the horrors of his slave-trade, and the Esquimaux Indian his filthy habits, for the daily perusal of the New Testament; each in his own language, which, till lately, had never been written.

When we take a calm review of these astonishing and delightful facts, it seems impossible not to confess with reverent gratitude, that if ever the blessing of the Almighty has been bestowed on a charitable and Christian institution, that blessing has rested, and rested pre-eminently, on the British and Foreign Bible Society.

But must it not be evident to every reflecting mind, that under the blessing of God, without which nothing is strong and nothing useful, this vast extent of suc-

cess is mainly owing to the simplicity both of our object and our constitution, and to “the *universality* which marks the system of the society in respect to its promoters, as well as to the sphere of its operations?”¹

Unfettered by any sectarian prejudices, and propelled by the native vigour, not only of Christian benevolence, but of unadulterated truth, the Bible Society pursues its generous and steady course; and if the enemy of all good be not permitted to divide and scatter our forces, there is every reason to believe that it will ultimately become effectual for diffusing, through the whole world, the knowledge of Christ crucified.

But once admit a TEST, however orthodox, and in whatsoever form,² and what is the consequence? The locks of Samson are cut, and the giant strength of the institution is lost for ever. The principle of *Scripture, and Scripture only*, which has hitherto been the glory of the Bible Society, is instantly exchanged for one which it has never ceased to disclaim—that of the human explanation of Scripture, or of *man’s comments on the words of God*.

The former principle is the strong and ample basis of a vast, harmless, and peaceable, co-operation. The latter principle is unstable in its very nature, and is nothing more than the commencement of indefinite division. As the test spreads and ramifies

¹ These were the words of the late Earl of Liverpool.

² If, for example, the Society were to make a public confession of its faith in any particular doctrine of Christianity, this would be a virtual disownment of all those members of the body who could not subscribe to the creed. It would only be introducing the test by a side wind, and would have precisely the same consequences as a more regular mode of enforcing it.

(which I believe to be its irresistible tendency) the various denominations of Christians will be compelled to retire within their respective more limited fields of thought and action ; and the goodliest fabric which has ever been raised in Christendom, will, in all probability, crumble into dust.

SECTION III.

ON THE PROPRIETY OF JOINING THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

SINCE the change in our laws proposed at the last annual meeting would have been subversive of the constitution of the Bible Society—that is, of the very basis on which the assembly was convened—and could not have been *justly* carried even by a large majority, it appears to follow, that the attempt itself, although obviously well intended, was unconstitutional and improper ; and this inference is, in my opinion, amply confirmed by its painful consequences—its bitter fruits.

To the steps which the promoters of the measure have since taken, in withdrawing from an institution to which they felt a conscientious objection, and in forming another more accordant with their own views, no man can offer any reasonable objection ; and had these been their only steps, we should have had nothing to do but to bid them a kind farewell. But they have gone much further. They have

openly professed their opposition to the Bible Society, as already constituted—they have agitated the whole country with circulars addressed to its members—they have invited and urged us all to forsake the ranks in which we are now placed, and to rally without delay around *their* standard.

Under these circumstances, I deem it necessary not only to offer reasons for a firm adherence to the old society, but to state the Christian and scriptural grounds, on which I consider myself to be precluded from joining the new one.

I. The first of these grounds is, I trust, of a temporary nature; for it is connected with that *opposition* to the British and Foreign Bible Society, to which I have just alluded, and from which, it may be hoped, the Christian principle of our dissentient brethren, will ere long induce them to desist. In the mean time, were I to subscribe my guinea to the Trinitarian Bible Society, I should only strengthen one institution to the disparagement and injury of another. And since that other, as it appears to me, is vastly more efficacious for the professed object of both institutions, than the Trinitarian Bible Society is ever likely to be, I should thwart and curtail, instead of promoting, the circulation of the Holy Scriptures.

II. Supposing this objection to be removed, as I trust it soon will be, I should feel but little hesitation in subscribing to the Trinitarian Bible Society,³ were it not for a bar, which has been placed across my

³ That little hesitation would arise chiefly from the name of the society, which I deem to be both improper and unfair—*improper*, because scholastic in its origin, and inexpressive of the whole idea which it is intended to convey; *unfair*, because in its intended sense, it is, substantially and practically, just as applicable to the old society as it is to the new one.

path, at the very door of entrance. I observe, from the rules of the Society, that I cannot become a member of it—that my very subscription would be refused—unless I “acknowledge” my “belief in the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, THREE CO-EQUAL AND CO-ETERNAL PERSONS, IN THE ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.” In what manner this acknowledgment is required to be made, does not fully appear; but whether it be delivered to the committee in writing, or pronounced in speech, or only implied by a deliberate adhesion to the Society—in any of the three cases—it is a formal and public declaration of faith.

My objection to such a declaration has no respect to the doctrine which it is intended to convey—a doctrine which I believe to be absolutely essential, in the scheme of Christianity—but to the terms in which it is couched, and to the circumstances under which it is required. I am aware that for the sake of brevity and clearness, we are sometimes almost compelled to apply *names*, not contained in the Scriptures, to doctrines which are in themselves perfectly scriptural; as for example, when we speak of the *personality* of the Spirit, or of the *deity* of our Lord Jesus Christ. But to couch the sublime truths of religion in scholastic definitions of man’s devising, and such as are utterly at variance from the *style* of Scripture, I consider to be a practice of a most dangerous tendency, and one which has been the source of unspeakable evils in the professing church of Christ. I have strong doubts whether there is any occasion of life, however solemn, on which I should feel myself justified in making a public profession of faith, in terms of this description.

But to make such a profession on a subject of the most awful and serious nature, as a necessary adjunct to the performance of obvious, familiar, duties—is evidently opposed to that *propriety* of action, that sound and sober *adjustment* of all our matters, which ought always to distinguish us as followers of Jesus Christ. A solemn declaration of faith on such occasions, appears to me (notwithstanding an obvious difference of circumstance) to be analogous, in point of *nature*, to a custom-house oath; when, in order to perform a harmless commercial act, a man is required to call upon God as the witness of his veracity, and to stake the salvation of his soul on the correctness of his accounts.

I believe that the infallible tendency of all such provisions is not to sanctify the *act*, but to degrade and familiarise the *profession*; and to lower our sense of high and mysterious truth, by mingling it improperly with matters of common occurrence.

Now although the object of the Trinitarian Bible Society is one of a religious character, the duty which it calls into action—that of giving or selling Bibles to the poor—is perfectly plain and simple; and like other philanthropic institutions, it has its matters of business—its affairs of money. I confess I never observed a more striking example of that unsuitable mixture to which I have now adverted, than in the fourth law of this highly professing society. “The members of this society shall consist of Protestants who acknowledge their belief in the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, three co-equal and co-eternal persons, in the one living and true God; and who unite to support the society by contributing one guinea or upwards annually, or ten

guineas or upwards at one time.” Is it too much to assert that this resolution is not only irreverent, and offensive to a correct devotional taste, but holds up two contradictory principles, in unlawful combination? If the profession of faith is the term of union, then that union is one of a religious and spiritual nature, and can have no legitimate connection with money. If the subscription of a guinea is the term, then is a membership in the Trinitarian Bible Society a matter of pecuniary account; and the profession of faith becomes misplaced and improper. It appears to be a breach of the third commandment in its subordinate, yet important sense of not taking the name of the Lord *lightly*.

III. But although a doctrinal test, when connected with a pecuniary condition, is grievously misplaced, it must still lead to the inevitable inference, that the union to which it introduces, is nothing less than a Christian brotherhood—a direct religious fellowship. Accordingly, the union of the members of the Trinitarian Bible Society, is universally understood and openly declared to be of this specific character.

In the report of the provisional committee, which was approved and adopted by the general meeting, it is expressly declared by these gentlemen, that in withdrawing from the British and Foreign Bible Society, they separate themselves from “an unscriptural and unholy alliance for a religious object;” and that, in forming the new institution, they “join with their CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,” in establishing a Bible Society which, while it is “truly Catholic in its spirit” is “STRICTLY SCRIPTURAL in its principles, and DECIDEDLY RELIGIOUS in its CONSTITUTION and OPERATIONS.”

Now, if any man were called upon to define the nature and character of a Christian church, he could not employ terms more suited to his purpose, than those which I have now quoted. A Christian church is a society of *Christian brethren*, united on *strictly scriptural principles*, and *decidedly religious* in its *constitution* and *operations*; and every society which is capable of being thus defined, whatsoever may be its circumstances and whatsoever its object, is beyond all question, a *Christian church*. All its members are united in church fellowship. They publicly profess that they are brethren in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What then are the religious terms, on which a participation in such an union is permitted by the Trinitarian Bible Society? They are two, and two only—first, that the applicant for membership be a Protestant: and secondly, that he acknowledge his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is a principle universally understood, that laws which ordain particular restrictions confer, by the very act, a general liberty—the liberty which they allow being just as clear and certain as the restrictions which they impose. If, for example, it were enacted, in the formation of a government, that no persons under thirty years of age should belong to the legislature, and if this were the sole restriction applying to the point, it would follow of course that all persons above that age, of whatsoever character or condition, would be eligible as legislators.

The law which fixes the terms of membership in the Trinitarian Bible Society is precisely of this nature, and the particular restrictions which it enforces are clear and specific. The society declares in substance, that it *will not* allow any man to belong to its

Christian brotherhood, who refuses either to protest against Popery, or to confess his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. But the general liberty which the same law confers is equally clear; and it is much more comprehensive—the society *will allow all other persons* to join in its *brotherhood*, whatsoever their character, and whatsoever their opinions. If they will but protest against Popery, and confess their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, they may be admitted into *church union* with the members of this society, although their conduct be in all other respects objectionable, and although they deny every other truth contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Every one will understand that in making these remarks, I am not impeaching the intentions of the founders of the institution; for these, I have no doubt, were praiseworthy. I am speaking only of the necessary consequence of their system, and of the practical difficulty in which they have involved themselves by adopting a fallacious principle. In endeavouring to make their escape from a *lawful co-operation*, they have opened their doors wide to an *unlawful union*. For my own part, since I dare not, as a Christian, expose myself to such a union, I dare not, as a Christian, join the Trinitarian Bible Society.

IV. My last objection to uniting with the new society, is immediately connected with the principle which has just been stated. I cannot believe that I should be promoting either the welfare of man or the glory of God, in connecting myself with any institution which contains the seeds of inevitable dismemberment, and self-destruction.

That such is the case with the Trinitarian Bible Society, I am compelled to conclude, not because its

members are quarrelsome or vicious, but for a precisely opposite reason—because I believe them to be honest and religious men.

Since the fellowship of this society is professedly religious—and since such a fellowship cannot be lawfully maintained with any one who denies essential truth—a member of this society is placed under a conscientious obligation either immediately to renounce his connection with it, or to extend the present test, until it embraces every article of faith which *he* deems to be essential in religion.

The imperative nature of this obligation was curiously exemplified even on the first rise of the society, by the exclusion of Roman Catholics, in addition to Socinians—a provision most injurious to its design as a *Bible Society*, and yet on the principles of the founders, not to be avoided. But will these conscientious Christians profess to maintain an union, in the church of Christ, with persons who deny the doctrine of the atonement, or of justification by faith, or of regeneration, or of sanctification, or of the resurrection of the dead, or of judgment to come? Will they embrace as brethren in the Saviour, those who deny his immaculate human nature? If they *will*, they may keep open their door of entrance as widely as at present, although they thereby infringe the express directions of Scripture, and make themselves responsible for other men's errors. If they *will not*, they must lose no time in adding all these particulars to their test.

But the Bible condemns an union in the church with *immoral men* still more emphatically than with persons of unsound opinions. Is it possible then that the question of morality can long continue to be un-

noticed in the test of this society? Must it not very soon describe the character, as well as define the faith, of those who shall be its members?

After all, where are we to draw the line between that which is essential, and that which is non-essential, in the Christian system? What particular errors shall be deemed so harmless, what faults so trivial, as not to present a bar to religious fellowship? On the other hand, what are the precise truths which all men must believe, and what the moral and religious duties which all men must practise, in order to their being lawfully admitted into union with this society? I conceive that these are questions upon which scarcely any two of its supporters will be found to agree. If then the members of the Trinitarian Bible Society follow up their own principles, every man amongst them must construct a test of his own—every man must raise up a hedge between himself and his neighbour—until the whole union is finally dissolved.

POSTSCRIPT.

ON VOCAL PRAYER AT THE MEETINGS OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

WERE the Bible Society religious by *constitution*, or in other words, were it a *Christian church*, its meetings would properly be assemblies for *worship*; and it would even be inconsistent with the nature of the society to attempt to impart to them any other character.

But since this society, while it pursues a Christian object, is no church at all—since it embraces as members all persons, of every description, who subscribe a certain sum of money—its meetings cannot reasonably be regarded in this high point of view; but as held chiefly for the purposes of business and information. Attended as they often are by a vast variety of people, who meet without any studied punctuality, interrupted by frequent ingress and egress, occupied sometimes with pecuniary reports, and at other times with entertaining anecdotes, they are surely not *on a level* with *acts of public worship*.

If, notwithstanding the *natural character* and *true intent* of such meetings, we introduce into them the public offerings of prayer and praise, it is to be feared that instead of imparting any sanctity to the business of the society, we shall only mar the so-

lemnity of our religious service. But although these assemblies were never intended to be meetings for worship, and *ought not* to be conducted as such, they are nevertheless useful and important; they afford abundant opportunity for the expression of Christian sentiment, and when managed with proper gravity and simplicity, are often found to be a source of edification as well as pleasure. Nor is there any thing in them which can discourage the heart-felt, secret, prayers of the individual members. The Christian approaches all his duties in life, in the feeling of dependence on Divine aid. How then can he forget his privilege of access to a throne of grace, when he is engaged in a work so immediately connected with the promotion of true religion as that of the Bible Society?

The view which has now been taken, can hardly be otherwise than familiar to all persons who have been accustomed to the working of the Bible Society. But even if its meetings were more select, and less business-like than they are, there still would be sound reasons for avoiding the introduction into them of public vocal prayer.

It is the professed principle, and vital strength, of that Society to occupy ground which is common to all religious men; and never to make an advance on to any area of dispute. Now, while all true Christians acknowledge that prayer is both their duty and their happiness, the mode and circumstances under which it ought to *be publicly offered*, are points respecting which the various denominations, even of pious believers, widely differ. Many conscientious members of the church of England, whose patronage is of great importance to the Bible Society, disapprove of

extemporaneous public prayer; a large body of dissenters have an equally strong objection to a written or printed form; and Friends believe that public prayer cannot be rightly offered, except under the guidance of the Great Head of the Church, and under the immediate influence of his Spirit. Here then we open the door of disunion and separation—a door which in the Bible Society ought for ever to continue shut.

But further—if a prayer is to be offered, who is to perform the service? If only a clergyman of the church of England, can the dissenters be expected to submit to such partiality? If a dissenting minister, shall we not offend our episcopal vice-presidents? If only ministers formally ordained, how shall we satisfy the conscience of the quaker? If laymen also, shall we not grieve our clerical brethren?

Let us not then be deceived, in reference to this important question, by a specious appearance of good; but let us adhere, with unalterable firmness, to our original *simple* principles; and while we exercise a holy watchfulness against every plausible attempt to infringe them, let us, *in earnest private prayer*, commend our cause to God. If such be our course of action, and if in all our proceedings we seek to be clothed in the *meekness and gentleness of Christ*, we may reverently believe that the Divine blessing will continue to rest abundantly on our unworthy labours.

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STRICTURES

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN writing the following pages, I have found it necessary, in some quotations from the work on which I am animadverting, to insert passages, in some measure involving the controversy which gave rise to the book itself. I wish it however to be distinctly understood, that I have studiously avoided all allusion to that controversy. Such allusion would have been wholly foreign from my present purpose. My sole object has been to uphold the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; and to prove that the author of "The Truth Vindicated," who comes forward under the profession of being an advocate for our religious Society, advances sentiments extremely dangerous in themselves, and utterly opposed to those which Friends have always felt it to be their duty and privilege to uphold.

I beg leave explicitly to state, that I consider myself as having nothing to do with any parts of this anonymous work, except those to which I have referred. Whatsoever else the work may contain, these passages must surely be regarded as rendering it unfit for circulation among the families of a Christian Society.

STRICTURES.

HAVING, with much sorrow, perused an anonymous pamphlet lately published, under the title of "The Truth Vindicated," and knowing that it has obtained a very considerable circulation, I think it right to extract several passages from the work, and to make a few remarks upon them, by way of Christian warning. I have the less difficulty in doing so, because I do not know even the name of the author. I cannot, therefore, be supposed to bear any ill will towards him personally, though I must confess it affords me some satisfaction to be informed that he is not a member of our Society. Anonymous as he is, I wish him well, and heartily desire that he may be brought to true contrition of soul, and to that lively faith in the atoning blood of Christ, by which he may obtain reconciliation with the Father, and may be made a *true* partaker of the influences of the Holy Ghost.

The first point which naturally attracts the attention of the reader of "The Truth Vindicated," is the anti-christian spirit and temper in which many passages of it are written, and the unseemly and violent language which the author employs in reference to the ministers and members of various Christian communities. I forbear from making extracts in support of this remark, being well assured that no sober and religious person who has cast his eye over the book, can fail to have observed a variety of expressions, under this head, which must have greatly shocked both his feelings as a man, and his principles as a Christian.

It would be well if all persons, who bear the name of Christian, would impartially try both their opinions, and their religious experience, by the fruit which they are producing. "The fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.*" The evils which are opposite to these graces—especially hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, an evil eye,—never fail to be mentioned in Scripture as the products of the corrupt and wicked heart of man.

It is one thing to bear our honest testimony to our own views of the truth as it is in Jesus; it is quite another thing to involve those who differ from us, but who still love the Lord Jesus Christ, in undeserved opprobrium and censure. Such fruit, in persons who make a high profession of religion, seldom fails to be connected, as I apprehend, with some dangerous, though possibly hidden, error in matters of faith and doctrine. I think it will be found that this remark

is substantiated by a close investigation of "The Truth Vindicated."

Before, however, I enter on this investigation, I wish to premise a single remark. Error is never so dangerous as when it is conveyed to us under the cover of great religious zeal, and in connexion with important truths, which it is our duty to embrace and uphold. It is like poison mixed up with wholesome food, and we well know that such a mixture has caused the death of many an unsuspecting person.

To proceed. In page 56, I observe the following passage :

"Really, when I read of a person, who, I understand for a number of years has been an acknowledged minister of the Society, calling in question the great leading truth upon which every doctrine and practice of the Society is professed to be based; *viz.* that 'the Word of God,' according to the Scriptures, 'is that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;'—really when I find a person of such standing and station in the Society, attempting to subvert the *very foundation of our hopes*, I cannot but, with the most earnest and affectionate entreaties, reiterate the language of one of old; 'To your tents O Jacob! and to your tabernacles, O Israel'."

The doctrine that a measure of the light of the Spirit of Christ is bestowed on mankind universally (a doctrine which I reverently accept) is here described as *the very foundation of our hopes*. Such a statement is liable to great objection. It is opposed to that fundamental principle of the gospel—the free forgiveness of sin through faith in the blood of Jesus; and it tends to excite a prejudice against the precious influences of

the Holy Spirit, by presenting them to us in a perverted and unscriptural form. Elias Hicks, of North America, was accustomed to express himself in precisely the same way;

“I endeavoured,” says he, “to gather the minds of the people to the light of Christ, or Christ the light in their own hearts; as the *only* sure guide to blessedness, and the *foundation rock* on which to build all our *hopes* of redemption and salvation.”

Again, “The people were pressingly invited to gather inward to the immutable principle of light and truth in their own souls, as the *Sure Rock of ages*, and the *only* means whereby we can be enabled to work out our salvation.”

I trust that every sound Quaker is fully prepared to confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ himself, *in all his gracious offices*, is the only foundation on which the church is built; and that the *free mercy of God in Him* is the sole ground of the Christian’s *hopes*. Compare Geo. Fox’s memorable words: “This Jesus, who was the foundation of the apostles and prophets, is our foundation; and we believe there is no other foundation to be laid, but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus; who tasted death for every man, shed his blood for all men, and is the propitiation for our sins.”—*Epist. to Governor of Barbadoes*, 1671.

Page 57.—“And let me here ask I. C. of what has HE been the minister? Hast thou been the minister of the ‘*letter which killeth?*’ or of the Spirit which giveth life?’ If only of the letter, thou hast been ministering only *thy own ‘suggestions,’* instead of waiting till thou hadst been ‘endued with power from on high.’”

The Holy Scriptures are here described as “*the let-*

ter which killeth," and are confounded with an individual's "own suggestions."

See also page 75.

"They learn, as all must learn that do the same, that the Bible, like themselves, *can do nothing of itself*; that it *is* as it declares itself to be, 'of no private interpretation;' and that, as for any power which it possesses in itself essentially, it possesses none at all,—*it is a mere dead letter*. And notwithstanding the same truth concerning it may have been spoken by Elias Hicks, or all the Deists and Atheists that have ever lived, it is of ITSELF but *a mere 'written,'* or, (more properly speaking in these times,) *printed book*."

And in page 208,

"If the law, therefore, by virtue of its own power, is incapable of producing obedience, if it requires the active operation of the executive to that end, what in fact is the law *itself* but '*a dead letter?*'"

I conceive it to be a very dangerous mistake to speak of the Holy Scriptures as the "Letter which killeth." When the apostle Paul uses these terms in contra-distinction to the "Spirit that giveth life," he is obviously contrasting the law of God, which condemns the transgressor to death, with the gospel, that spiritual religion, which brings to light life and immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

The disrespectful terms in which the Holy Scriptures are mentioned, p. 75, (as quoted above) are truly worthy of Elias Hicks himself, who was in the frequent habit of using similar expressions. The Scriptures, on the contrary, are "lively oracles;" whether written or printed, they contain the words of Christ, which are "spirit and life" to those who receive them.

¹ 2 Cor. iii, 6.

Compare the testimony on this subject of one of the most eminent of our early Friends, George Whitehead: "We know none among us that call the Holy Scriptures a dead or carnal letter, nor do we own the words."—*Antichrist Unmasked*, p. 21. So also George Fox: "So that we call the Holy Scriptures as Christ, the apostles, and holy men of God called them, the *words of God*."—*Journal*, p. 147. *Comp.* John vi, 63, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

In page 64 we read as follows:

"They will tell you that the Bible is their standard and their ultimate rule; and since it contains the greatest possible variety of instructions, that can be adapted to the greatest possible variety of circumstances in which man can be placed, none find a difficulty to produce authority for the views and principles that conform with their interests or their prejudices; and thus is it torn piecemeal asunder at the headstrong will of any, instead of being sought for as *an aid in the discovery and further prosecution of those things which have been already made manifest by the light*; and hence we find that those principles of moral action, which are most clearly revealed in the hearts of all, and distinctly testified of in the Scriptures, are nevertheless, obscured or subdued, misunderstood, or entirely neglected, by bringing down their authority to be tested *by a standard which our own carnal desires or interests have erected*."

The Scriptures are here represented, not as the appointed means of making known to us those grand doctrines which, without the Christian revelation as set forth in the New Testament, would have been, so far as we know, for ever concealed from us; but simply as an aid to the farther discovery of truths already made known to us by the Spirit—also as a *standard*

erected by men's carnal desires and interests. The meaning of the author in these extraordinary expressions, becomes apparent in page 161.

“There is a wide difference, be it remembered, between acknowledging the just worth of all such things as it has pleased the Almighty at different times to communicate to our fellow-creatures, for general or particular ends and purposes, and bowing down as to an infallible, unerring, and supreme judge, to such *records of those communications, as some few men of worldly power and literary attainments have thought fit to select and constitute for that purpose.*”

This shameless declaration respecting the formation of the canon of Scripture, is repeated still more offensively in the Preface to the Second Edition.

Page vii.—“If the apostle Paul declared in his day that no other foundation could be laid than Jesus Christ, what authority have you to reject it, and substitute another, even the *perishable letter of Scripture?* Bring forth your strong reasons; produce the legal instruments of your power; show us the sign-manual of your authority to ‘disallow’ that ‘living stone,’ chosen of God, ‘elect and precious,’ and to supply its place by one *chosen of man* after the device of his own heart! Why must the foundation upon which we are to build, be of *man's* choosing. What divine command to that end has been issued? and to whom? Where can I find the proclamation from heaven, that the apostolic declaration, that ‘other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid,’ is null and void? and that the only sure foundation, upon which all faith and works can now be based, is *just so much, neither more nor less, of the writings of inspired men, as the contentions priests of the Roman Catholic church thought proper, sixteen hundred years ago, to appoint for that end?* Is it any where declared in any of the books of Holy Scripture, that a time should arrive, when the pompous dignitaries of an ecclesiastical establishment should assemble in convocation together, and determine for themselves, and the rest of man-

kind, *what copies or translations of copies of the writings of holy men should, to the end of time, be considered the only depository of the divine will?* If no Scriptural authority can be adduced to support this priestly dogma, why do you so vehemently contend for its acknowledgment? Were these men, who thus gave out to the world this decree, and are you who blindly follow in their benighted way, commissioned to proclaim it, under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit of God? No: for you already, in the vain conceit of your imaginations, prescribe bounds for that Holy influence—even within the confines of an *Eden of your own planting*; wherein alone, you tell us, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of Life can be found. What assumption, then! what arrogance! what Pharisaical pretension! for some few men to erect, according to the dictates of their fancy, the deductions of their understandings, or the suggestions of their prejudices and interests, an immutable and paramount standard for the test of truth, from the *records* of the epistles, prophecies, and other writings of good and holy men!”

And again in the Postscript, p. 227.

“Where and when did the commission issue forth from ‘the King of kings and Lord of lords,’ that any man, or body of men, should *appoint a standard and a test out of such writings as they should approve*; that these should take the judgment seat, and that the Holy Spirit, before his influences are to be heeded, must be brought up to the bar and judged by the judge that *you have appointed?*”

If the books of the Old and New Testament were selected by “men of worldly power and literary attainments,” for “purposes” of their own; if they were “chosen of man after the device of his own heart;” if they are an “Eden” of man’s own “planting;” if they were “appointed” as Holy Scripture by “contentious priests of the Roman Catholic church;” if any other books written by holy men might have been fix-

ed upon for the purpose with just the same propriety—as this writer dares to insinuate and even to assert—then, as I conceive, Christianity, the religion of the Bible, falls to the ground. But every one who has, with any care, examined the subject, must be aware that these propositions are as false, as they are audacious. The divine origin of that series of books which compose the Old Testament—as distinguished from any other books of the Hebrews—is established by many evidences, and by the express authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. That of the several books of the New Testament, as distinguished from all other existing Christian writings, is matter of no mere priestly decision, but of sober, substantial, and rational proof.

Here I must observe, that according to this author, not only might other writings have been selected as Holy Scripture, just as properly as the books of the Old and New Testament, but it is matter of entire doubtfulness whether these books themselves are, in fact, *Holy Scripture* or not.

See page 70, 71.

“Now these premises may be all very correct, so far as they are set forth. ‘All Scripture,’ (provided all Holy Scripture only is spoken of,) I most undoubtedly admit ‘is given by inspiration of God;’ but whilst I admit this, and of consequence, the conclusion (but not the conclusion I. C. educes) that flows from it, I also deem it to be of the utmost importance to know whether all that you *say* is *Holy Scripture*, is *really* Holy Scripture or not; and whether there never was, *is not now*, and never will be, any Holy Scripture, but so much of the writings of ‘holy men,’ as is at present contained in the book called ‘the Bible.’”

Christians of every denomination have hitherto united, not only in saying, but in firmly believing, that *all* the writings of the Old and New Testament are Holy Scripture; but in this verdict our author is obviously unable to participate. Of course he cannot regard the Scriptures as “the written revelation of the will of God.” This further appears from the following extract.

Page 181.—“Lies, thefts, murders, adulteries, and the whole black catalogue of direful crime stand over the guilty heads of nations who boast of the special favour of heaven, and flatter themselves that salvation is for them alone, because they possess what *they call* ‘the highest standard,’ ‘the ultimate appeal,’ ‘the Word of God,’ ‘*the written revelation of his will,*’ &c.”

May the time never come, when the professors of Christianity shall cease, not only to call the Scriptures “the written revelation of the will of God,” but cordially and reverently to accept them in that sacred character!

So far is this from being the case with the author of “The Truth Vindicated,” that he appears to regard the Scriptures as nothing more than an outward light, *set up by foolish men!*

Page 78, 79.—“I. C. makes ‘the true knowledge of God,’ his ‘holy law,’ and ‘the Gospel of life and salvation through Jesus Christ,’ synonymous terms with the holy Scriptures; but they are nowhere said to be so *in* the Scriptures. Such a meaning can only be applied to them by construction; and a construction, too, at complete variance with the whole tenor of Scripture evidence. It assuredly is a strange thing, that men who appear so very solicitous to exclude the influence of ‘certain impressions,’ and mere ‘suggestions,’ from their company in search of truth, should, all

the time, yield up their own judgments to no higher authority;—that they should make it a matter of solemn regret that any should be so deluded as ‘to set up a light within,’ and yet, after all, to rest themselves upon no surer foundation than *the recorded experiences of other men*. They complain, and rightly, of those who ‘set up a light within,’ and yet *themselves set up a light without. Foolish men!*”

From these passages it appears very plainly that the actual divine authority of the books of the Old and New Testament, is to this author a matter of very great doubt and question. But, on the supposition that they contain revelations from God, he alleges *first*, that they have been greatly injured, obscured, and corrupted, in the course of their transmission; and *secondly*, that these revelations belonged to ages long since past away, and are therefore inapplicable to ourselves, either as a test or a rule. These sentiments are amply developed in the following extracts:

Page 71.—“Even supposing I grant without inquiry, that every letter and syllable, from the first chapter of Genesis, to the last of Revelation, ‘is given by inspiration of God,’ and that within these contracted limits, is included all that he did (which is contrary to the Scripture testimony itself) at any time make known by his Holy Spirit, to the children of men, still there is no good ‘argument’ to shew that the whole of those things which were *revealed at different times, to different individuals, under different circumstances*, are to stand as the only appeal, and ‘ultimate standard,’ to the end of time, for all states and conditions of men.”

Page 73.—“I say it is a *most irrational and extraordinary doctrine*, that the influence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man cannot be distinguished from the mind’s own ‘suggestions,’ or from ‘the delusion of the devil,’ unless it be brought to the records of former ‘inspirations,’ with *which some holy men were favoured, who have been at rest from their la-*

bours, some, hundreds, and others, thousands of years ago! Where is the chapter and verse, in any part of 'the ultimate appeal' for *this most irrational and extraordinary doctrine?* And supposing, for the sake of more clearly showing *its utter groundlessness in all truth and reason*, that we ARE to 'test' a present revelation to *ourselves*, by a revelation to some one *else* many hundred years ago, *what* revelation, I ask, am I to test it by? Am I to 'test' it by what Moses did or said? or by what those did and said who 'walked with God' before Moses' time? Or am I to look into some of the Prophets, or the Evangelists, or the Epistles of the Apostles, or into that book of heavenly mysteries, called the Revelation of John the Divine? Or, is it of no consequence into which part I look, as each and every part is alike competent to decide the important fact?"

Page 91.—"Therefore, when men assert that the *writings of other men who lived centuries ago*, and wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are a 'higher rule' to me, than the influence of the *same* Holy Spirit upon my OWN mind; I surely am not to be dissuaded by an assertion, grounded upon *no reason whatever*, that these admit of no comparison."

Page 102.—"Now, the influence of the Holy Spirit is completely denied by this doctrine, except upon certain conditions; which conditions are a reference to revelations vouchsafed to 'holy men,' *centuries and centuries ago, originally recorded in another language, and translated into ours, not from the original copies themselves either, but from copies of those copies*, of which, probably, I may say more farther on. Under these circumstances alone, say they, does the Holy Spirit operate upon the heart of man."

Page 112.—"But I. C. and the Reviewers say in effect, though not in the precise words, that there can be no higher rule to us, who are living now, and to those who are to come, than that which WAS given by inspiration to other men. That which is given, and that which was given, constituting the COMPARATIVE difference, in my estimation, between the two rules, if *that which WAS given can properly*

*be called a rule to us at all.*² And we should also bear in mind, that the latter has been subject to all the accidents attendant upon *transcribing, translating, printing, and numerous other circumstances*, necessarily incidental to all those things which providence has left in charge, in the hands of erring and imperfect man."

Again in page 168,

The Holy Scriptures are described as

"The written records of *some* of God's special dealings, *in generations that have long since passed away;*"

And in page 199,

As "the records of *his former revelations.*"

On these passages I think it necessary to make a few remarks.

1. In the first place, the hackneyed objection about transcription, translation, &c. as affecting the practical authority and usefulness of the Holy Scriptures, ought to have no place among the professors of Christianity. What a precious evidence is it of that special Providence which has been over the church of God in reference to the Holy Scriptures, that they have been handed down from age to age without material injury; that all the various readings which have arisen from this copying and recopying, have failed to deprive us of a single doctrinal sentiment, of a single moral prin-

² On a reference to the second edition of "the Truth Vindicated," I observe that the line here marked in italics, is omitted. But since an edition of several hundred copies, containing these expressions, has been circulated, I consider it quite necessary to notice them. The sentiment which they convey, is in fact an inevitable inference from the author's premises. If the Scriptures are only a past revelation intended for the sole benefit of the men who then *were*, they of course can be no rule to us at all.

The additions made to this work in the second edition, render it still more objectionable than before.

ciple, or of a single historical record. In connexion with this remark, it may be well to notice the further notion of this writer, that the Holy Scriptures are a mere nose of wax, capable of being twisted by different interpreters, in the most discordant and opposite directions.

Page 65.—“Then come the Scotch congregational men, with the same book in their hands, declaring it to ‘be the ultimate appeal for the truth of every doctrine, and the propriety of every practice.’ Then the Wesleyan, the Baptist, the Ana-Baptist, the Primitive Methodist, the Muggletonian, the Southcotian, the Independent, the Irvingite, and the rest of the numerous sects, all distinct, and completely averse to the views and interpretations of each other, upon the same texts of their ‘ultimate appeal,’ and ‘only sure foundation;’ each following some learned Scribe or Rabbi of their order, till somebody else starts up, with some fresh interpretation, and causes another separation. These all have their ‘distinctive peculiarities,’ arising from ‘suggestions which most comport with their own particular bent of mind.’”

This is precisely the argument which has so often been adduced against Protestants by Roman Catholics. The fact is however, *first*, that the Bible, like all other books, must be interpreted according to the common and intelligible rules of language; *secondly*, that although its contents are often wrested from their true meaning, that meaning, on all points essential to salvation, is clear as the noon-day; and *thirdly*, that *on these points* the great body of the professing church of Christ is *substantially agreed*.

2. If the Holy Scriptures are to be set down as the mere narratives of some of the dealings of God with men who have been dead thousands of years—as the

mere records of revelations made, in past ages, for the benefit of the generations which were then living—it plainly follows, that, practically speaking, they are to us *passés* and obsolete.

Under such a view of the subject, what becomes of the principle so plainly stated by the apostle Paul, and so uniformly supported by the Society of Friends as well as other Christian bodies, that they are able to make us “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” that they are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness,” and that they “were written aforetime for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope?”³ Above all, what becomes of our dependence on the efficacy of those *bygone* facts, the incarnation, atoning sacrifice, and glorious resurrection and ascension of the eternal Son of God?

Here surely is a point of supreme importance. There can, I think, be no question that this author’s peculiar method of treating the contents of the Holy Scriptures, in the character of past and obsolete revelations, discards from our notice, and even from our creed, that mighty plan of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, on which hang all the hopes, and all the virtues of the Christian believer.

3. If we give up the Holy Scriptures as the test—the adequate and only written test—by which supposed revelations respecting either doctrine or practice must be tried, we at once yield ourselves a prey

³ 1 Tim. iii, 16, 17; Rom. xv, 4.

to wild and unrestrained enthusiasm. How different was the case with our early Friends! While they held up a high and holy standard respecting the inward teaching of the Spirit, they did not fail to guard against this fatal error. They openly professed their willingness that all their doctrines and practices should be brought to the Scriptures as the judge and test; and they freely allowed that whatsoever cannot abide that test—whatsoever is contrary to the declarations of Holy Writ—must be regarded as a mere delusion.

So Robert Barclay. “Moreover because they (the Holy Scriptures,) are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors which may be supposed by the injury of the times to have slipped in, are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith,⁴ we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony may therefore justly be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that *all our doctrines and practices* be tried by them, which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as *the judge and test*. We shall also be very willing to admit as a positive, certain maxim, that whatsoever any do pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be ac-

⁴ I think these expressions much below the truth. Had R. Barclay lived to witness the result of the labours of many eminent biblical critics during the last 150 years, he would have entertained a higher view than he appears to have done, of the *substantial correctness* of the text of the Old and New Testaments.

counted and reckoned a *delusion of the devil*.”—*Apology*, Prop. III.

With the same clearness did our early Friends reject every doctrine which is not contained in the Bible, and cannot be proved by it. “We do firmly believe,” says Barclay, “that there is no other gospel or doctrine to be preached, but that which was delivered to the apostles, and do freely subscribe to that saying, Let him that preacheth any other gospel than that which hath been already preached by the apostles, and according to the *Scriptures*, be accursed.”—*Apology*, Prop. III.

4. For the very same reasons which preclude his allowing the Holy Scriptures to be a *test*, is our anonymous author led to question even the possibility of their being a *rule*. According to him, an impression made on his own mind by the Holy Spirit (or supposed by him to be so made) is given by inspiration, whereas Scripture only was so given; in other words, it was given in ages long since past to those who lived when it was written; but we who live in the present day, have little or nothing to do with it. Hence it of course becomes extremely questionable, whether Scripture “can properly be called a rule to us at all!”

This near approach to infidelity, in the garb of high spirituality, is, under another form, repeated in the following passage.

Page 133.—“I cannot therefore see how any ‘higher rule’ can by possibility exist, than that by which we are to be led, and in which we are to walk—even the blessed Spirit of Christ. And without reversing the meaning of plain words as they appear in your own ‘ultimate appeal,’ and substituting

others in their stead, I must candidly declare my utter incapacity to account for any OTHER rule."

Since the author of "The Truth Vindicated" is utterly incapable of accounting for any OTHER rule than the Spirit of Christ in the heart, the good old Christian doctrine that the Holy Scriptures are a divinely authorised rule of faith and practice, must of course be regarded as passing the limits of his conception.

Compare the words of Elias Hicks:

"Nothing short of a full belief in and obedience to the revelation of the Spirit of truth (a manifestation of which is given to every man to profit withal) as the ONLY rule of faith and practice, can make a real Christian!"

In perfect conformity with this declaration, our anonymous author says, p. 68.

"We acknowledge no other infallible leader, NO OTHER 'ultimate rule,' but Christ the Light, 'the beginning and end of days,' the author and finisher of our faith."

Very different was the language of one of the most eminent of the early Friends, Richard Claridge. Speaking in behalf of the Society in his day, he says, "We do sincerely and unfeignedly believe the following propositions:—1. that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not of any man's private setting forth, but were given by inspiration of God. 2. That they do contain a clear and sufficient declaration of all doctrines, in common to be believed in order to salvation. 3. *That the Holy Scriptures are the best outward rule and standard of doctrine and practice. That whatsoever either doctrine or practice, though under pretensions to the immediate*

dictates and teachings of the Spirit, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, ought to be rejected and disowned as false and erroneous; for whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith.—*Treatise of the Holy Scriptures.*

When we speak of the Holy Scriptures in that character of an “ultimate appeal,” which this writer not only denies, but treats as a subject of scorn and irony, we must be understood as expressly reserving three important points; *first*, that a measure of the light of the Holy Spirit, independently of any outward revelation, shines in the consciences of all men, and shews them the distinctions between right and wrong; *secondly*, that the peculiar calls and services of individual Christians, cannot be settled by a reference to Scripture, but are matters of providential arrangement and direct divine guidance; *thirdly*, that in order to a saving apprehension of the truths contained in the sacred volume, the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost is absolutely indispensable. But every true Quaker is, as I conceive, prepared cordially to acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures, and they alone, are a *divinely authorised record* of *all the doctrines* which we are required to believe, and of *all the moral principles* which are to regulate our actions—not to mention the luminous declaration which they contain of our relative and particular duties. Hence it unquestionably follows, that in every case of doubt or controversy, in relation to matters either of doctrine or moral principle, the decision of Scripture is “ultimate.” There lies no appeal from it to any higher

authority whatsoever; for the simplest and most powerful of all reasons—namely, that the authority of the declarations which God has made, is the authority of God himself.

(The comparison which some of the early Friends were accustomed to institute between the Spirit as the primary Rule, and the Scripture as the secondary one, was not intended, as I conceive, to apply to the question of authority, but only to that of *order* and *dignity*.) They looked upon the influence of the Spirit as the primary rule, because it is the very source of true religious knowledge; because it operated among men before the Scriptures were written, and still operates in a certain measure, where they are unknown; and because it is the originating power from which the Scriptures themselves proceeded.

But that what we believe to be the guidance of the Spirit, in our own souls, is superior, *in point of authority*, to those plain declarations which were given forth under a vastly larger measure of the same divine influence; that is, to the words of God himself;—that we *are not* to test our own impressions by Scripture; and that we *are* to test Scripture by our own impressions—are notions which the Society of Friends, as I believe, is, and always has been, as ready to condemn as any other Christian society in the world. I am indeed prepared to admit, that a few of our early writers, in the heat of controversy, and in the zealous support of the spirituality of the gospel, have, in some instances, expressed themselves obscurely, and it may be, even incorrectly, on this subject. But Friends in general, and the Society as a body, have been as

uniformly staunch as any of their fellow-Christians, to the great principle of the direct divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. Most readily have they at all times confessed the absolute delusiveness of every notion or impression, which cannot abide the trial of this *judge, rule, or test.*

Our author's taunting enquiries respecting the *parts* of Scripture which we would select for our test, are susceptible of a plain answer. While the Christian believer cordially acknowledges that all the writings of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration, he is of course aware that the development of doctrinal and moral truth as set forth in Scripture, was progressive. From the records of the preparatory dispensations, he has no difficulty in selecting such principles as are in their nature permanent, and these form a part of his test; but that which obviously *completes* his standard, is the light of the glorious gospel—the doctrines and precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, as they are recorded in the New Testament.

To denominate our Lord Jesus Christ, *a Rule*, as does this author in the last mentioned extract, involves the danger of a very fatal heresy; it obviously tends to divest him of his personality, and to convert him into a principle. Of this heresy we shall presently find occasion to notice some further symptoms. In the mean time, the author of "The Truth Vindicated" does not hesitate to insinuate, that without any instruction whatsoever in Christianity, every creature under heaven may have the saving knowledge of the "*gospel of life and salvation through Jesus Christ.*"

Page 165.—“The Bible bears its testimony that ‘life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel,’ and that ‘light is come unto *all* the world, and that this is the condemnation.’ If the gospel therefore be ‘preached to *every* creature,’ and if by the gospel ‘life and immortality are brought to light;’ then, unless men ‘choose darkness rather than light,’ ‘*every creature under heaven*’ might have the *saving knowledge* of God, of his holy law, and of *the gospel of life and salvation through Jesus Christ*. That such would be necessarily acquainted with the—different histories, epistles, advices, and vast collection of extraordinary and deeply interesting matter, recorded in the Scriptures, I do not pretend to say.”

“The gospel” means “glad tidings.” Now the “glad tidings” through which our Lord Jesus Christ brought “life and immortality to light,” and which the apostles proclaimed to *all mankind*, (as contrasted with the *Jews alone*,) were those of everlasting salvation through the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God. But this writer has evidently formed a very different notion of the ever-blessed “*gospel of life and salvation through Jesus Christ*.” With him, it appears to be nothing more than that which may be already known by the untutored aboriginal native of Patagonia or New Holland, who has never heard the name of Jesus. Does not this notion tend to a practical disregard of the Christian revelation?⁵

One of the most delusive and dangerous ideas thrown out in many of the passages already quoted, is that the writings which are now, or may hereafter, be composed, under a measure of the influence of the Spirit, are just as much Holy Scripture, as the books

⁵ I am of course aware that, in a limited sense, *the gospel* was *prophetically* preached to Abraham, to the Jews before the Christian era, and even to our first parents, in the original promise of a Redeemer.—See Gal. iii, 8; Heb. iv, 2.

of the Old and New Testament; or rather as such parts of those books as this author may be pleased to allow to have been given by inspiration.

This idea is further developed as follows,

Page 169.—“For myself, I openly avow, that I esteem the Bible, and *all those writings that have proceeded from the same source*, above all the writings in the world besides.”

Page 199.—“How, then, can the Baptist Magazine writer give himself up so far to the instigations of a false and evil spirit, as to say that there is scarcely a doctrine of revelation which these principles do not discard or explain away: when it is the very principle of revelation *past, present, and to come*, that the Society asserts? The Magazine writers will have *no* revelation, but that which is contained in the *records of the past*.”

Page 204.—“The principles of the Society of Friends lead us to believe that ‘all Scripture *is* given,’ and ever *was* given, and ever *will be* given ‘by inspiration of God.’”

The Scripture which *was* given by inspiration, may I presume, be some part at least of the Christian’s Bible; that which *is* so given, can be nothing else than the works of certain modern writers, such as Robert Barclay, Wm. Penn, Samuel Fisher, &c.—those *other* writings “*which have proceeded from the same source*.” That which *will be* given, must be the additions to Holy Writ, which we may expect from the hands of our children, or our grand children! That the genuine principles of the Society of Friends lead into no such awful confusion, will be readily acknowledged by those who are best acquainted with their tenets and their history.

Unquestionably it is one of the *testimonies* always borne by the Society of Friends, that no person can rightly preach the gospel, or even write as he ought

to do, on the subject of religion, without a *measure*, however small, of that immediate divine influence under which the prophets delivered their messages, and the apostles proclaimed the truths of Christianity: but when they were charged by their adversaries with the abuse of this principle, and with an attempt to place their own writings on the shelf of Holy Writ, they never failed explicitly to deny the charge. "But for equalling our writings with *Scripture*," says Penn, "we have no such expressions or *thoughts*."⁶ They well knew that the evangelists and apostles of old, were inspired for the high purpose of *originally promulgating* the great facts and doctrines of Christianity; and they utterly disclaimed the notion that they were themselves commissioned to disseminate any new truth.⁷ They openly declared that they had nothing to add to the glorious gospel, as it was proclaimed by the primitive followers of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to the *whole system of truth*, as it is revealed in the Old and New Testament, they were accustomed to apply the words of our Lord at the conclusion of the Apocalypse: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."—See *Geo. Fox's Address to the Governor of Barbadoes*.

In the following passage, the apostle Paul and

⁶ "The New Athenians, no noble Bereans," A. D. 1692.

⁷ "We do not plead for any new *gospel faith* or *doctrine*, different from that which Christ and his holy prophets and apostles taught, and is recorded in the Scriptures of truth:" *Besse's Defence of Quakerism*, 1732 p. 62.

Robert Barclay, appear to be placed on an equal footing.

Page 217.—“And let me here inform the latter in answer to a query of his in a preceding page, that the authority of Robert Barclay, or Paul, or any one else, or “even an angel from Heaven,” according to the principles of the Society, could not subvert the truth of the everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But those principles do not allow us to join Paul and Jesus as testimonies of equal power, as does the Baptist Magazine writer, since Paul, and all the Apostles and Prophets that ever lived, were but *the offspring of Adam, made of flesh and blood like ourselves*, and were but instruments “to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” Whereas, Jesus is his own witness, being “the incorruptible Word of God,”—“*born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the will of God.*” The authority of Barclay, therefore, does not rest exclusively upon Paul or any other good man, or Prophet, or Apostle; but the authority of Paul, as well as that of Barclay, and every other man past, present, or to come, must rest upon Christ Jesus the Rock of Ages, “for other foundation can no man lay.”

It is sufficiently obvious from this passage, that the authority of the apostle Paul, and that of Robert Barclay, are in the view of this author, *very much on a level*. But what is that Christ, on which they are both here represented as resting? Not the Son of God manifested in the flesh, and therefore “the offspring of Adam,” “born of blood,” and “made of flesh and blood like ourselves;” (see Heb. ii, 14—17,) but *an inward principle born of God in the heart*. If this be indeed the author’s meaning—and that it *appears* to be his meaning will scarcely be denied—I can only say that *this* is proper and genuine Hicksism. Shall we ven-

ture to give any countenance to such awful mischief? See 1 John iv, 3; “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard, &c. :” *comp.* John i, 14.

Compare Elias Hicks’s words ;

“The Lamb or innocent life of God was slain in our first parents by their first transgression. Hence it is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world agreeably to the Scriptures, *but no otherwise slain* than by man’s rejecting it and turning away from it into the serpentine wisdom. So likewise in our coming into the obedience of Christ, we take upon us his divine nature ; and are thereby made alive and come to witness the Lamb which was slain *in us* to rise from the dead and become Christ in us the hope of glory, or the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Therefore all the varied names given in Scripture to *this divine light and life*, such as *Emmanuel, Jesus, sent of God, great prophet, Christ our Lord, grace, unction, anointed, &c.* mean one and the same thing, and are nothing less nor more than the *spirit and power of God in the soul of man*, or his Creator, Preserver, Condemner, Redeemer, Saviour, Sanctifier, and Justifier.” p. 330.

Of all the forms of infidelity which have ever been palmed upon the credulity of mankind, this appears to me to be the most dangerous and the most offensive. While it makes even a lavish use of the names and titles of our Lord Jesus Christ, it denies to him, in his divine character at least, all personal attributes, all rational existence. While it pretends to the highest flights of spirituality, it removes the only basis of all spiritual religion. While it destroys the very root of the acknowledged principles of our Society, it dares to assume the name of *Quakerism*. Above all it is a

mystic web, which at once produces and conceals the fertile seeds of everlasting death.

After all, our author seems to be in considerable doubt whether the Holy Scriptures, mentioned by the apostle Paul, and declared by him to be given by inspiration of God, *are any written books whatever*; or any thing but impressions, made by the Spirit, in the secret of the soul. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures," says Paul to Timothy, "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, &c,"⁸

On this passage the professed Vindicator of Truth writes as follows :

Page 109.—"But I am sure it is more than I. C. or the Reviewers can demonstrate, that Paul *meant, in this text, mere outward writings, by the term Scripture.* I do not mean to dispute the point at this time; but it perhaps may be as well to recollect, that Paul speaks elsewhere of another kind of Scripture, than that which we generally call Scripture—'written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.' This perhaps may be worth consideration, especially coupled with the admonition immediately preceding Paul's estimate of the Scriptures to Timothy; 'But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.' Doubtless, he had 'learned them' of Him 'who taught as never man taught.' 'Forasmuch,' says the apostle, 'as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written, *not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*' So that Paul believed in other Scripture or writing than that which was written with ink; and declared the one to be more glori-

⁸ See 1 Timothy iii, 15, 16.

ous than the other. And it is this spiritual Scripture or writing, that he declares to be the 'New Testament,' and *not those writings of his, and the rest of the disciples and apostles, to which that name is now generally given.*"

This spiritual and inward Scripture is elsewhere spoken of by this Author as follows:

Page 111.—"If therefore, I. C. means that there can be no higher rule to every individual man, than that which 'is given by inspiration of God' for *every individual man to obey* (that is the light of Christ in the soul) I admit its truth, and from *what other source men individually are to obtain a knowledge of their duty, is more than he or any one else can demonstrate.*"

Can any thing be more injurious to the precious doctrine of the Holy Spirit, than first to confuse his influences both with the name and character of Scripture; and next, under the guise of spirituality, to refuse to accept the sacred writings of which He is the Author, *as a divinely authorised source of instruction to men individually?*

The doctrines respecting the Holy Scriptures, contained in these passages of "The Truth Vindicated," may, I apprehend, be briefly and fairly summed up as follows:

1. That the books of the Old and New Testament are "the letter that killeth"—that they constitute the Bible, which is a mere written or rather printed book,—a dead letter.

2. That these books were formed into a canon, not upon any sound principle of historical or internal evidence, but according to the arbitrary selection of literary men of worldly power—contentious priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

3. That what part of them, or whether any part of them, is really *Holy* Scripture, is matter of doubt.

4. That they had relation to the circumstances and peculiar condition of men in ages long since passed away, and even if once given by inspiration, are to us obsolete or gone by—a proposition which applies, in all its force, to the records of Scripture respecting the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God.

5. That the Scriptures have been erected into a standard or test of doctrine and practice, by the “carnal desires and interests of men;” and that to try any supposed present revelation by them, is “most irrational and absurd.”

6. That since they belong to past ages, they cannot properly be deemed a rule to us at all—nay that they cannot even be conceived of by this author as a rule.

7. That such parts of them as were truly given by inspiration, are no more “Holy Scripture,” than writings produced, under a measure of the same influence, in modern times.

8. That after all, the only *Scripture* which can be employed as a guide, test, or rule, is that which is internal and spiritual—namely impressions which we believe to be made by the Spirit of God, on our own minds, individually.

Now whatever may have been the intentions of this author, and whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for the errors so apt to arise in the heat of controversy, I must assert that these propositions individually and collectively, are *undeniably deistical*. Most assuredly they are in palpable con-

tradiction to that *substantial* testimony which our religious Society has borne, from its earliest rise to the present day, to the direct divine authority of the Holy Scriptures—to their lively and spiritual character,—to their profitableness for the great purposes of salvation and edification—to their applicability both as a test and a rule,—and to their supreme unrivalled excellence.

APPENDIX I.

Declarations made by the Society of Friends, or on their behalf, respecting the divine origin and authority of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

1. Edward Burrough, in a work entitled "*Satan's Design Defeated*," published in 1659, writes as follows:

"*Objection.* The Quakers hold that the Holy Scriptures are not the word of God, nor the saints' rule of faith and life, neither is it the duty of every one to search them.

"*Answer.* The Holy Scriptures were given forth by the Spirit of the Lord, as holy men of God were moved; they are the words of God, and a declaration and a treatise, Luke i, 1; and that which the saints had handled and tasted of the word of life, that they declared forth in words and writings, Acts i, 1; and the Scriptures, as they were given forth by the Spirit of God, are a true declaration of what is to be believed and practised in relation to eternal salvation."—*Burrough's Works*, p. 514.

2. In a Declaration of Faith issued by George Fox and others, addressed to the Governor and Council of Barbadoes, A. D. 1671, we read as follows:—

"Concerning the Holy Scriptures, we believe they were given forth by the Holy Spirit of God, through the holy men of God, who, as the Scripture itself declares, (2 Pet. i, 21,) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"We believe the Holy Scriptures are the words of God."—*Fox's Journal*, 3rd edition, p. 436.

3. In a Declaration of the Faith of the Society of Friends, issued in 1689, and presented to the committee of Parliament, we find the following query and reply, viz.

“Do you believe and own the Holy Scriptures contained in the books of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration, and to contain all matters of doctrine and testimony, necessary to be believed and practised, in order to salvation and peace with God?”

“*Answer.* Yes, we do: and by the assistance of the grace and good Spirit of God, which gives the true understanding of the mind of God and meaning of Holy Scripture, we always desire to live in the faith, knowledge, and practice of of them, in all things appertaining to life and godliness.”

4. The Confession of Faith, signed by thirty-two Friends, and laid before Parliament, in 1693, declares,

“That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are of divine authority, as being given by inspiration of God.”

5. In the year 1694, William Chandler, Alexander Pyott, Joseph Hodges, and others, wrote and published “A Brief Apology in behalf of the people, in derision called Quakers, for the information of our sober and well inclined neighbours.” From this treatise the following extracts, on the subject of the Holy Scriptures, are taken, viz.

“We therefore desire our well disposed neighbours candidly to weigh what we have to allege against the clamours of those, who, to be sure, will not set us out to our best advantage; and to receive an account from ourselves what we are, and what we believe and hold for Christian truths; who certainly must needs know better our own belief than those who, perhaps, never examined it to any other end than to find fault, if ever they did it; and, also, that you will not think it strange that we express not our belief in some particulars, in the affected terms of other professors of Christianity; but think it more reasonable and safe to content ourselves with that dress of language, in which the Holy Ghost thought fit to hand them to us in the Holy Scriptures; those most excellent and divine writings, which, above all others in the world, challenge our reverence and most diligent reading; those oracles of God, and rich Christian treasury of divine saving truths, which were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of them, may have hope; and

are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; to the perfecting and thoroughly furnishing of the man of God to every good work, making him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, containing all Christian doctrines necessary to be believed for salvation, and are a sufficient external standard and touchstone, to try the doctrines of men; and we say with the apostle, Whosoever shall publish and propagate any other gospel faith than is therein testified of to us by those inspired penmen, who were the first promulgators thereof, though he were an angel, let him be accursed. All which and whatsoever is therein contained we as firmly believe as any of you do; and as it is the duty of every sincere Christian. We are heartily thankful to God for them, who, through his good providence, hath preserved them to our time, to our great benefit and comfort.”—*Page 5.*

6. Thomas Ellwood, in “An Answer to some Objections of a Moderate Enquirer,” says,

“The second objection is, You deny the Scriptures to be any rule for man and woman to walk by, so as to direct them to the saving of their souls.”

“*Answer.* In this we are misrepresented. We sincerely own, love, and regard the Holy Scriptures, believing with the apostle that they were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17; and that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus, *verse 15.* And great benefit and delight we find in them, reading them in the openings of that Divine Spirit by which they were given forth. We are so far from denying them to be any rule, &c. that we acknowledge them to contain many excellent rules, precepts, doctrines, and instructions, directing man and woman how to walk, that they may obtain the salvation of their souls.”—*pp. 3, 4.*

7. In an Epistle by way of preface to a collection of the “Doctrinal Books” of George Fox issued by the Second Day’s Morning Meeting in London, anno 1705, we find the

following testimony to his esteem and reverence for the Holy Scriptures.

“Although he gave preference to the Holy Spirit (as all true spiritual Christians do,) yet his true love to and sincere esteem of the Holy Scripture, (as being given by Divine Inspiration,) was clearly manifest: In his frequent advice to Friends, to keep to Scripture language, terms, words, and doctrines, as taught by the Holy Ghost, in matters of faith, religion, controversy and conversation; and not to be imposed upon and drawn into unscriptural terms, invented by men in their human wisdom.”

8. William Penn, in his “Testimony to the Truth, &c.” published 1698, thus speaks of the belief of Friends in the Holy Scriptures:—

“Whereas, we in truth and sincerity believe them (the Holy Scriptures) to be of divine authority, given by the inspiration of God, through holy men, they speaking or writing them as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. That they are a declaration of those things most surely believed by the primitive Christians, and as they contain the mind and will of God, and are his commands to us, so they, in that respect, are his declaratory word.”—*Penn’s Works*, vol. v, p. 337.

9. Samuel Fuller, in his “Serious Reply” to some Queries proposed to the Society of Friends, written in 1728, says,

“We believe the holy doctrines of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration, and, therefore, of divine authority.”—*Page 27*.

10. In the year 1731 a document was published by the Friends of Bristol, containing the following passage:—

“First, we put you in mind of our ancient and constant faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his eternal Son, the true God, and in the Holy Spirit, one God blessed for ever more; and that our Society *always did and still do* acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration; and we earnestly exhort you steadfastly to maintain and keep the same faith pure and inviolate.”

11. From the numerous more modern Declarations made

by the Society to the same effect, may be selected that of the Yearly Meeting, A. D. 1829.

“We feel ourselves called upon at this time to avow our belief in the inspiration and divine authority of the Old and New Testament.”

12. Also that of a Committee of the Yearly Meeting, A. D. 1835.

“It is also in unison with the example of our predecessors in religious profession, that we heartily acknowledge respecting the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, that they were given by inspiration of God; that they are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and that with the preaching of the gospel, they are the appointed instrument for making known to mankind that divine plan of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ and him crucified, to which they bear so clear a testimony.”

13. Declaration of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia, 1828.

“The Society of Friends have always fully believed in the authenticity and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and acknowledge them to be the only fit outward test of doctrines, having been dictated by the Holy Spirit of God, which cannot err. They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and whatever any teach or do contrary thereto, they reject as a delusion.”

14. An Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, 1828.

“We believe them (the doctrines of the Christian religion) because they are testified of in the Holy Scriptures, and ‘all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all goods:’” 2 Tim. iii, 16.

APPENDIX II.

Advices issued, by the Society of Friends, respecting the reading of the Holy Scriptures.

“And forasmuch as, next to our own souls, our children and offspring are the most immediate objects of our care and concern, it is tenderly recommended to all that are or may be parents or guardians of children, that they be diligently exercised in this care and concern for the education of those committed to their charge; that in their tender years they may be brought to a sense of God, his wisdom, power, and omnipresence, so as to beget an awe and fear of him in their hearts (which is the beginning of wisdom;) and as they grow up in capacity, to acquaint them with, and bring them up in the frequent reading of, the Scriptures of truth; and also to instruct them in the great love of God, through Jesus Christ, and the work of salvation by him, and of sanctification through his blessed Spirit.”—1706.

“We also exhort all parents of children to be very careful to educate and train them up in the fear of God, and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according to the Holy Scriptures.”—1712.

“Let the Holy Scriptures be early taught our youth, and diligently searched, and seriously read by Friends, with due regard to the Holy Spirit, from whence they came, and by which they are truly opened.”—1720.

“This meeting considering that some in the present age do endeavour, as well by certain books, as a licentious conversation, to lessen and decry the true faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, even that precious faith once delivered to his saints; which by the mercy of God, is also bestowed

upon us; do therefore earnestly advise and exhort all parents, masters, and mistresses of families, and guardians of minors, that they prevent, as much as in them lies, their children, servants, and youth, under their respective care and tuition, from the having or reading books or papers, that have any tendency to prejudice the profession of the Christian religion, to create in them the least doubt or question concerning the truth of the Holy Scriptures, or those necessary and saving truths declared in them; lest their infant and feeble minds should be poisoned thereby, and a foundation laid for the greatest evils."—1723.

"Inasmuch as the Holy Scriptures are the external means of conveying and preserving to us an account of the things most surely to be believed concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling the prophecies relating thereto; we therefore recommend to all Friends, especially elders in the church, and masters of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the younger, a reverend esteem of those sacred writings, and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein. And that ministers, as well as elders and others, in all their preaching, writing, and conversing about the things of God, do keep to the form of sound words, or Scripture terms; and that none pretend to be wise above what is there written."—1728.

Also to be very careful to prevent their children and servants from reading such vile and corrupt books (some of which have been published of late,) as manifestly tend to oppose and reject the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and to introduce Deism, Atheism, and all manner of infidelity and corruption, both in principle and practice."—1729.

"With this view we did last year, and do now again, earnestly recommend and beseech all Friends, to admonish and exhort the youth under their care, not to read, but refrain from all such books as tend to make void the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and to promote profaneness and infidelity in the earth."—1730.

"And that mothers of children as well as fathers (as they have frequently the best opportunities) would take particular

care to instruct them in the knowledge of religion and the Holy Scriptures; because it hath been found, by experience, that good impressions, made early on the tender minds of children, have proved lasting means of preserving them in a religious life and conversation. This practice was enjoined strongly upon the people of Israel by Moses and Joshua, the servants of the Lord, who required them to read or repeat the law to their children. And the apostle Paul takes notice of Timothy's being well instructed in the Holy Scriptures from a child; and of the unfeigned faith which dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, 2 Tim. i, 5, who no doubt had a religious care of his education. We farther tenderly recommend to all heads of families, that they do frequently call their children and servants together; and in a solemn, religious way, cause them to read the Holy Scriptures."—1731.

"We tenderly and earnestly advise and exhort all parents and masters of families, that they exert themselves in the wisdom of God, and in the strength of his love, to instruct their children and families in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion contained in the Holy Scriptures; and that they excite them to the diligent reading of those sacred writings, which plainly set forth the miraculous conception, birth, holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, meritorious death, and glorious resurrection, ascension, and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to educate their children in the belief of those important truths as well as in the belief of the inward manifestation and operation of the Spirit of God on their own minds, that they may reap the benefit and advantage thereof, for their own peace and everlasting happiness, which is infinitely preferable to all other considerations. We therefore exhort, in the most earnest manner, that all be very careful in this respect; a neglect herein being, in our judgment, very blame-worthy.

"And further: where any deficiency of this sort appears, we recommend to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, that they stir up those whom it may concern to their duty therein."—1732.

"Dear Friends, we must remind you to take all convenient

opportunities to put your children upon reading and meditating in the Holy Scriptures; which having proceeded from the dictates of the Holy Spirit, do afford the most comfortable and salutary instructions of all writings whatever, as we have heretofore often advised, and particularly in our Epistles of the two last years, in which the advices on this head being large and comprehensive, we refer thereto.”—1733.

“As there has been heretofore, so there yet remains upon this meeting a peculiar regard to, and weighty concern for, the offspring of Friends, that the rising generation might be trained up in the principles and practice of the Christian religion. In order whereunto, as formerly, so now again, we recommend an humble waiting upon the Lord for the manifestation of his power and Spirit, and a diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures in your families; and that masters of families, parents and guardians of children, at proper and convenient opportunities, would stir up those under their care to diligence herein: shewing them that those sacred writings do contain the doctrines and principles of our profession.”—1734.

“We think it will contribute very much to your success in these endeavours, if you put them frequently in a solemn manner upon reading the Holy Scriptures, especially such parts of them as relate to the great doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion; and then wait upon God with them, that you may become instruments to open their understandings; and in the sense of his power and wisdom, press them closely to the practice of what they read. Such an exercise as this, begun early, and frequently repeated, we recommend as the indispensable duty of all concerned, and the most likely means for the preservation and improvement of children in the way of truth; and through the Lord’s blessing, to secure them from being prevailed upon by the many false, deceitful spirits that are gone forth into the world, tending to subvert the Christian faith, and a practice and conversation agreeable thereto.”—1735.

“We find it our duty, also, to remind you, that a godly concern may always rest upon your minds, for the good education of your children in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord. Excite them to a frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, and a reverent regard to the blessed truths therein contained.”—1738.

“Dear Friends, as much as in you lies, encourage a frequent and diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures in your families. In them are contained the promises of eternal life and salvation. For as a steady trust and belief in the promises of God, and a frequent meditation in the law of the Lord, was the preservation of a remnant in old time, so it is even to this day. And as a distrust and disbelief of the promises of God, and a neglect of his holy law, was the occasion of the complaints made against the Jews, the posterity of Abraham; even so we have reason to fear, that the apparent declension in our time of true piety and godly zeal, in many places, is too much owing to a disregard of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, and the promises of the Holy Spirit in them recorded.”—1740.

“Dear Friends, We think it necessary to renew our former advices to parents and guardians of youth, that to the utmost of their power, they train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures. Let this be more your care than to gather riches and heap up wealth for them.”—1742.

“We think it especially necessary at this time to remind you of the former advices of this meeting, respecting a frequent and diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures; the doctrines contained in those inspired writings, duly attended to, and firmly impressed upon the minds of our young people, may be a means of preserving them from the danger and infection of such corrupt and irreligious principles, as having a tendency to the exaltation of self and human abilities, would lessen their dependence on the power and Spirit of God, their only security and preservation.”—1743.

“We also recommend to school masters and mistresses, to educate the children committed to their charge in the frequent reading of those sacred writings.”—1745.

“The several advices and exhortations formerly given forth by this meeting, and particularly in our Epistle of the last year, viz. frequently to wait upon the Lord in your families;

to exercise yourselves in often reading the Holy Scriptures, and observing the excellent precepts therein contained, are again earnestly recommended to your serious consideration and practice.”—1749.

“We earnestly exhort and entreat you to abide steadfast in the faith of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to take heed lest any of you be seduced by the craft and subtlety of designing men, some of whom have published books tending to alienate the minds of men from the true and saving faith, and to lead them to a disesteem of the Holy Scriptures, and the principles of the Christian Religion therein contained. Beware, lest any of you, who profess to follow the light of Christ, be drawn aside from the simplicity of his truth, and diverted from your obedience to his holy cross by imbibing such principles as would promote a disbelief of his gospel, and of the important doctrines revealed in the Holy Scriptures, necessary to be believed, in order to the salvation of those to whom they are so revealed.”—1750.

“We also tenderly advise you to bring up your children and families in the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures; and to use your utmost endeavours to prevent their having and reading such books as tend to profaneness and irreligion, and to alienate their minds from the love of God, and obedience to his requirings.”—1753.

“You who are parents, or masters, be diligent in frequently reading the Holy Scriptures, advising and exhorting your children and servants to the same.”—1755.

“Another point of duty, we find in our minds to press upon all at this time is, that you be frequently conversant with the Holy Scriptures, by the good providence of God preserved down to our time, which contain the most excellent declarations of his love to men, our duty to him, and one to another, and most certainly, through faith in Christ Jesus, tend to our instruction in righteousness.”—1765.

“As next to our own souls, our offspring are the most immediate objects of our care and concern, it is earnestly recommended to all parents and guardians of children, that the most early opportunities may be taken in their tender years, to impress upon them a sense of the Divine Being, His wis-

dom, power, and omnipresence, so as to beget a reverent awe and fear of him in their hearts; and as their capacities enlarge, to acquaint them with the Holy Scriptures, by frequent and diligent reading therein, instructing them in the great love of God to mankind through Jesus Christ, the work of salvation by him, and sanctification through his blessed Spirit.”—1767.

“We earnestly request that parents and all others who have youth under their tuition inure them to the frequent and diligent reading of the sacred writings, which through divine goodness are afforded to us, for our instruction in righteousness, and that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”—1769.

“We conclude with recommending you individually to the grace and good Spirit of God in your own hearts (the sure guide to salvation,) and to the diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of those in which is recorded an account of the life, doctrines, and sufferings of our blessed Saviour; beseeching you reverently and humbly to walk according to that holy pattern.”—1792.

“Seeing, we doubt not, that a perusal of the Scriptures is the frequent employ of many families, we desire that the servants may be made partakers of the benefits resulting from the practice, and from occasional opportunities of retirement in spirit. Indeed we are afresh engaged to press upon Friends a diligent acquaintance with the sacred records, and a diligent endeavour to store the minds of their tender offspring with the great truths of Christian redemption.”—1805.

“It has afforded us much satisfaction to believe that the Christian practice of daily reading in families a portion of Holy Scripture, with a subsequent pause for retirement and reflexion, is increasing amongst us. We conceive that it is both the duty and the interest of those who believe in the doctrines of the gospel, and who possess the invaluable treasure of the sacred records, frequently to recur to them for instruction and consolation. We are desirous that this wholesome domestic regulation may be adopted every where. Heads of families who have themselves experienced the benefit of religious instruction will do well to consider, whether in this

respect, they have not a duty to discharge to their servants and others of their household. Parents looking sincerely for help to Him of whom these Scriptures testify, may not unfrequently on such occasions, feel themselves enabled and engaged to open to the minds of their interesting charge the great truths of Christian duty and Christian redemption.”—1815.

“We are glad to know that the daily reading of the Holy Scriptures in the families of Friends is so prevalent as it is, and we earnestly desire that this practice may be observed by all our members; and that those who neglect the performance of it would seriously consider the great injury which they and their families suffer by such omission. The more we rightly know and comprehend the truths of the Bible, the more we shall find that they contribute, under the power of the Holy Spirit, by their practical application to our moral and religious conduct, to lead us forward in the way of life and salvation. We therefore earnestly recommend to all the diligent private reading of the sacred volume, in addition to the practice already alluded to.”—1828.

“In addition to the practice of the family reading of the Holy Scriptures, the importance of which we deeply feel, be encouraged often to read them in private: *cherish a humble and sincere desire to receive them in their genuine import*; and at the same time, dear Friends, avoid all vain speculations upon unfulfilled prophecy. Forbear from presumptuously endeavouring to determine the mode of the future government of the world, or of the church of Christ. Seek an enlightened sense of the various delusions of our common enemy, to which we are all liable: ask of God that your meditations upon the sacred writings may be under the influence of the Holy Spirit; their effect when thus read, is to promote an increase of practical piety, and the right performance of all our civil and religious duties, and not to encourage vain and fruitless investigations. Remember, dear Friends, that they are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” And whilst we fully acknowledge that “all Scripture is given

by inspiration of God," a view supported by sound and undeniable rational evidence, let us ever bear in mind, that it is only through faith which is in Christ Jesus that they are able to make wise unto salvation. As this precious faith is sought for and prevails, the evidence of the Spirit of God in our hearts most satisfactorily confirms our belief in the divine authority of these inestimable writings, and increases our gratitude for the possession of them, and for the knowledge of that redemption which comes by the Lord Jesus."—1832.

The advices which have thus frequently been given by the Yearly Meeting of London, on the subject of a diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures, have been cordially received by its members. This is proved by the practice so generally prevalent among Friends of Great Britain and Ireland, of assembling their families at least once in the day, for the purpose of hearing a portion of Scripture, and of afterwards waiting on the Lord, for a short time, in silence.

The care of Friends to promote a knowledge of Scripture among those who are placed under their authority, was evinced at an early period of the Society's history. This conclusion may fairly be deduced from the interesting fact that in the year 1675, Friends in the Island of Barbadoes, were exposed to persecution because of their zealous endeavours to instruct the Negroes, on their estates, in a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.—*See Sewel's History*, vol. ii, p. 518.

"For when they, to bring their Negroes, if possible to some knowledge of the true God, caused them to meet together for an hour or two once a week, to instruct them according to their capacity, by reading to them some part of the Holy Scriptures, and speaking something to this purpose: a law was made, forbidding the Quakers to let their Negroes come into their meetings, though kept in their own houses, on pain of forfeiting every such Negro as was found there, or ten pounds instead thereof."

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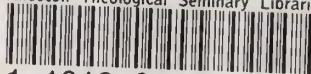
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